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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



["THAT NIGHT," SHE SAID, SLOWLY, "I WAS KNOCKED DOWN BY A CART AND RUN OVER!"]

## NOEL LORD ARDEN.

## CHAPTER XII.

LORD BRABOURNE did not refuse the request of his beautiful young hostess. Truth to say, he, like Noel, had thought a great deal more of the little waif than was good for his peace of mind; but Ira, though not brilliantly clever nor wonderfully wise, was yet quick enough to read the secret Lady Fenella had kept from all the world.

He knew as well as though she had told him so in plain words that the young chatelaine of Arden Court had given her heart to her cousin. It puzzled him very much that Noel and Lady Fenella had never met since she came to her house.

It puzzled him yet more that Lady Nora, whom he had been wont to regard as the most inveterate matchmaker, had evidently no thought of converting her niece into her daughter-in-law; but he never wavered in his opinion respecting Fenella's secret.

He threw himself into all the pleasant amusements going on at Arden Court, made great friends with Moselle, and openly admired his bride; but all the while he was always thinking of Fenella, and the strange mystery which seemed to overshadow her.

They were very much together, and Ira devoted himself to her comfort with ready alacrity, but all the while he knew that he must crush the love rising in his heart. Something told him it was all in vain—never would those blue eyes shine with tenderness for him.

"When is Noel coming home?" he asked Lady Fenella, the day after the wedding, when a certain flatness seemed to have fallen over the Court after the recent excitement, and he had persuaded her to go with him for a long walk beside the river's banks.

"I don't know!"

"I cannot make it out!" exclaimed Lord Brabourne, impetuously. "He was the last man in the world to covet a fortune not his, or grudge it to its lawful owner. Why doesn't he come home? Noel was cut out for a country landowner. Why, even if he was only the

manager of the estate, he would be far happier than in Germany!"

"You don't suppose I am keeping him away?" said Fenella, a little indignantly. "The thought that I have robbed him of his inheritance is my one trouble! I would gladly, thankfully, have given up the Court to him, only they would not let me!"

"I should think not, indeed! But why doesn't he come here just for a visit; to make acquaintance, so to say, with his new relations?"

The old wistful look came back to Fenella's face as she raised her eyes to Ira's.

"Don't you really know?"

"I haven't an idea!"

"But you saw him before he went abroad?"

"And he looked ten years older. I put it down at the time to his disappointment. Of course it is rather a blow for a man to lose home and fortune at one stroke; but still it is not like Noel to go on brooding over it, and to refuse even to come and see his mother. I tell you, Lady Fenella, I can't understand it!"

"I can!"

"Then please enlighten me!"  
 "About a week before he ever heard that I was found, Lord Arden lost something more precious to him than home or fortune. His lawyer told me—I think to appease my scruples—that my cousin would have gone abroad just the same had he remained master of the Court!"

"He was in love!"  
 "Yes; and before he could tell her so they were parted. He told Mr. Harding no blame could attach to her. She probably never even suspected his devotion. When, after months of weary seeking, he found her—she was another's!"

"Poor old Noel! Does his mother know?"  
 "She knows there was 'someone' for whose sake he was blind to the charms of all the girls she introduced to him, but she does not know the end of the romance. She speaks of it to me sometimes although her boy had gone away to make a home for his idol, and I—I have not the heart to undecieve her!"

"He ought to come home."  
 "I don't know!" said Lady Fenella, slowly. "I should think hard work the best cure for anything of that kind! I wonder who the girl was?"

"So do I!"  
 "I have heard the Devenishes of Arden never love a second time," said Nell, dreamily. "The last twelve months have been cruelly hard upon my cousin, for they have robbed him of all he held dear."

"They have not been hard on you."  
 "I don't know!"

"Surely you are happy here?"  
 "I love the Court dearly, and Lady Nora is kindness itself to me; but—"

"Do tell me what you are thinking of?"  
 "It seems to me," said Nell, simply, "I lead a very idle, aimless life. Don't you think, Lord Brabourne, a girl wants something more than luxury and ease to make her happy?"

"Yes," said Ira, simply. "My cousin Nan always told me no girl could be quite happy without loving and being loved; but surely, Lady Fenella, lack of love cannot trouble you. There must be many a man who only wants a word of encouragement to throw his heart at your feet."

"I shall never marry," said Fenella, simply. "I may keep Lord Arden out of his inheritance for a few years, but at my death it will come back to him again."

"You are too young to say such things."  
 "Am I?" said Nell, wearily. "I feel like Methuselah at times; but Nan need not fear poverty in the future, for I have a fixed presentiment that I shall live and die Fenella Devenish."

She did.  
 Lord Brabourne turned the subject abruptly. "Apropos of cousins, Lady Fenella, do you remember mine? Nan has never forgotten you."

"And I often think of her. I should like of all things to see her again."

"Why not?"  
 "How can I?"  
 "Easily."

"You forget she does not even know my name. I wrote to tell her that fortune had smiled on the little wail she had been so kind to, but she has no idea Fenella Devenish is little Nell."

"Let me tell her!"  
 "Why?"

"I don't think you are quite content here," said Ira, slowly. "You will miss Miss Watts—I mean Mrs. Moselle—very much, and August is such a lovely time of year in Yorkshire. Why should you not go and stay with Nan? She would be delighted!"

"But my aunt?"

"Lady Nora believes in me," said Lord Brabourne, with a smile. "I shall tell her you are looking pale, and that Nan, who is just like a sister to me, wants to see you."

"Would not Mrs. Dane come here?"

"I am afraid not. You see there is a Miss Dane at Foxgrove, now a most important

person, by the way, who is much too juvenile to pay visits."

"I should like to go."

"Then I will manage it with Lady Nora."

"But are you sure Mrs. Dane will want me?"

"Certain."

Nell smiled. Already she had paid a very pleasant visit to Mrs. Wyndham, and had the satisfaction of knowing that lady and her stepson fully understood now why she had failed to appear at Thorpe Rectory. She had been introduced to Lady Emily Brabourne, and her small daughter; in short, the only people who had been kind to her in her thorn-strewn path, and whom she had not seen since her prosperity, were Mrs. Dane and Noel.

Two days later Lord Brabourne was at Foxgrove *de die in die* with his cousin.

"Nan, I have brought an enigma for you to solve; but first let me tell you I have seen your beautiful *protégée* of last autumn, and she would like, of all things, to pay you a visit."

Nan looked up delighted.

"You have really seen Nell?"

"I spent a month in her society."

"Sit down, like a good boy, and tell me all about her. What is her husband like?"

"She hasn't got one."

"She has!"

"My dear girl, I was in the house for a month. I know all her family history, and I most emphatically declare she has not got a husband. She says she never shall have one, but that is not quite such a certainty."

"But she wrote to me," said Mrs. Dane, in rather an aggrieved tone, "and said she had found a loving, careful home."

"So she has."

"But with whom?"

"Prepare for a big surprise, Nan. The little wail, whose story and misfortune so touched you, is now no less a person than the Lady Fenella Devenish, mistress of Arden Court, and all the wealth-poor Noel once thought was his."

"And they are engaged?"

"Not a bit of it. Noel is abroad. He has not even seen his 'cousin,' and according to Lady Fenella is wearing the willow for some unknown beauty who took to herself a husband before he had time to propose to her."

To Lord Brabourne's intense surprise Nan seized his hand, and cried penitently.

"I do believe it is all my fault."

"I don't quite see how?"

"Then Lord Arden was in love with her—Nell, I mean. He as good as told me so."

"I need to suspect as much, but you and we were both grievously mistaken."

"We weren't; and you'll see the mischief is all my fault. I thought she was married, and—only think, Ira—I wrote and told him so."

Ira whistled.

"Well," he said, philosophically, "I think it might have been worse. Evidently Noel is moping himself to death in Germany because he thinks his idol is married, and just as evidently (to my mind, at least) the idol is unhappy in Highshire because she persists in thinking she has robbed him of a fortune. They only want a little friendly interference, and they will agree to share the fortune and live happy ever after. Why don't you drop Noel a line, and say that? Nell isn't married at all, but remains a spinster—Fenella Devenish by name."

"I can't!"

"I think you ought!" said her cousin, just a little severely. "You see, Nan, you have led him into the mistake; you must rectify it."

"You foolish boy; how little you understand Lord Arden. The letter you want me to write would do more harm—if possible—than the one I did write last January."

"How so?"

"Lord Arden is poor, Fenella is rich. Do you think he is the sort of man to propose to

an heiress whom he has seen but once? No! I have a far better scheme than that."

"Will it please your majesty to unfold it to me. Really Nan, you are getting into an awful tyrant. I pity your husband and Miss Dane."

"They don't need your sympathy," retorted Nan. "Yes! I may as well tell you what I propose, since I shall want your help."

"What a singularly disinterested motive!"

"Ira, do listen!"

"I am all attention."

"They must meet here!"

"Who?"

"Lord Arden and Nell."

"Easier said than done!"

"Nonsense! The hardest-worked attaché gets a holiday sometimes."

"Now, I remember, Arden wrote that if I would come him the latter end of August he'd come back with me for a few days' shooting. Really, Mrs. Dane, fate seems playing into your hands."

"If you manage nicely."

"I trust me carefully!"

"Well, then, you had better talk a great deal about Lady Fenella!"

"What for?"

"It will throw Lord Arden off the scent, as they say in hunting talk. You can hint that she is very different from what he expects, and that you have just spent a month with her. When suddenly inform him that to your very great surprise you met 'Nell' at the Court, that she and the young heiress are inseparable!"

"I shall feel like an arch conspirator!"

"Not at all. You can demolish the husband theory by telling him it was my mistake. Then you might go on to inform him Nell is staying with me, and that if he liked to spend a day or two at Foxgrove on his way to the North, you would fancy I will make him welcome."

"Anything more?"

"Isn't that enough?"

"A little too much!"

A strange suspicion fell on Nan. She looked straight into her cousin's eye, and then a tear came in her own.

"Oh! Ira, what a wretch I have been to talk to you like this, but you see, I never thought I ever guessed!"

Ira smiled a little sadly.

"There was nothing to guess, dear! I could no more help caring for her when the sun could come shining; but I knew the moment I saw her at the Court, it was all in vain. The Devenishes love but once, and Lady Fenella lost her heart that September evening we both remember."

"But you can't go to Germany now."

"Why not?"

"It seems perfectly horrid you should have to be the one to bring them together!"

"Not at all. Don't you know, Nan, I would do anything in the world to see her happy. I will go to Germany as soon as Nell comes here, but you had better not tell her my destination. The theory of Noel wearing the willow for someone else I leave you to deal with as you will."

"I shall write to Lady Nora to-night."

And she did. Such a pretty, engaging letter, saying how sorry she had been so many months had flown without her meeting the heiress of Arden Court, and begging Lady Nora to spare her niece for a visit to Foxgrove.

"But you can't go, Fenella," said her aunt, when she gave the girl the letter; "it is a little village in the country, and Mrs. Dane expressly says there are no other guests. You would be moped to death."

"I should like to go, please, aunt! Lord Brabourne talked so much to me about his cousin. I am very anxious to see her."

"Well, perhaps Ira will be there part of the time. That would make it better."

"Please let me go!" pleaded Nell. "I have quite set my heart on it, Aunt Nora."



"Well, you mustn't stay long. I had a note from my boy this morning, Fenella, and he is coming to England for some shooting in September, and proposes to run down and see us."

"I am so glad!" said Nell, simply, "for I know you must have missed him terribly," and forthwith the young heiress decided to prolong her visit at Foxgrove until she heard that Lord Arden was safe in Germany.

"I should like you to know him, Fenella," said Lady Nora, wistfully.

"I fear he does not share the wish, aunt, since he has let two-thirds of a year go by without seeking to make my acquaintance!"

"He tells me he cannot possibly stay more than three days, so his visit will be very brief."

"I think it would be far better for me to remain at Foxgrove. I am sure you will want Lord Arden all to yourself."

"I want him to see you, my dear, and learn to admire his kinswoman. You and Noel are the last of the old race, Fenella."

Miss Dane's claims were set aside for once, and her mother herself went to the station to meet Lady Fenella.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" she said tenderly, as she took Nell into her arms. "How strangely things have turned out! Your history is more like a chapter out of a novel than a page of real life. I can hardly believe it even yet, Lady Fenella!"

"Please call me Nell. You can't think how I yearn for the old name. I feel sometimes as though I were two people, and had two identities."

"You are not changed a bit. I should have known you anywhere!"

They were in Nan's boudoir now. Miss Dane had been duly admired, her father was fortunately dining out, so the two girls (they were little more) could enjoy a long uninterrupted tête-à-tête.

"And the man," whispered Nan, presently, "who wanted to marry you. What became of him?"

Nell blushed. Even now she could not think of that incident in her life, and all it had cost her without a shiver.

"In my poverty that was my greatest trial, the having to hide myself from him; but do you know, Miss Dane, I never need have feared him, had I only known it. At the very time he asked me to marry him he was engaged to an heiress. He came into a large fortune, and I heard a little while ago that he had gone to America. He has passed quite out of my life, and I am thankful for it."

"Do you know when I had your letter I thought you were married."

Nell shook her head.

"I shall never marry."

"And I predict you will. I believe some day I shall see you Countess of Arden."

"Never! Noel is in love with someone else, only he has lost her!"

"You are a little goose," said Nan, tenderly, "and Lord Arden is a big one. You have both of you fallen into the greatest mistake imaginable; but as it is partly my fault I can't blame you," and then she explained to Nell her version of the story.

But Lady Fenella would not believe it.

"He told Mr. Harding he saw her (the girl he loved) on the pier at Hastings with her husband."

"Well, weren't you at Hastings in December?"

"Yes; but he could not have seen me with a husband, or, indeed, any gentleman."

Nan smiled brightly.

"Well, it is a free country, and you must let me keep my own opinion, which is—that I shall see you Lady Arden!"

## CHAPTER XIII. AND LAST.

The meeting between Ira and Lord Arden was very warm. The two had always been

much attached, and now that fortune had frowned on Noel, Lord Brabourne only clung to him the closer.

"You looked fagged to death!" was his frank observation. "I am sure you were never meant for diplomacy. Why don't you go home?"

"I hate England!"

"Very unpatriotic of you. Well, remember, please, you have promised to help me to shoot partridge some time next month!"

"Yes; I am quite looking forward to it."

"And yet you hate England!"

"I hate the thought of living there. I shall be very glad to go over for a visit. I have promised my mother to spend a day or two at the Court before I return. True, it will be an ordeal, but I don't see how to get out of it."

"Why should you? You are not mean enough to dislike going because you used to be master there?"

"I am not quite so bad as that. But, Ira, old fellow, I am very proud, and I hate the thought of meeting that girl."

"Meaning Lady Fenella?"

"Yes."

"What is there to mind?"

Noel flushed.

"I have never seen her, but I am well assured she is vulgar and uneducated. I know for a fact that her bosom friend is Miss Watts. Well, I once had to endure half-an-hour of Mrs. Watts's society, and I assure you, she was awful! If Fenella is formed on her model she is utterly worthless!"

"You don't seem to hold a high opinion of your cousin! What makes you judge her so very harshly?"

"You know my mother and her little ways. I don't think she ever had a friend or visitor before whose praises she did not chaunt in her letters to me. Well, she has never found one good thing to say of Lady Fenella."

"Yet she seems fond of her!"

"She never writes against her; she simply ignores her name. Then she did not present her this season; that, in my mind, speaks volumes. Evidently my poor mother finds polishing her a hopeless task, and is honestly ashamed of the relationship."

"You've made up a terrible array of proofs; now listen to facts. I have just been staying at Arden Court. Miss Watts was there. Lady Nora gave her her wedding breakfast when she married a very nice young lawyer. I have seen a good many girls in my time, but I never saw one I thought more fit to make a home happy than Nina Watts—Mrs. Moselle, as she is now. If I had had a sister I would have liked her after that model; not pretty, perhaps, but a good, pleasant, home-loving creature. Her father came down to give her away, and I took rather a fancy to him. From your mother's account I should say Mrs. Watts and the second girl were intolerable; but, certainly, the only two branches of the family I met I liked extremely. So much for your charges against Lady Fenella's friends. Now for herself. Your mother is devoted to her, and puts her in her own gracious fashion. I don't know much about the 'ologies' and the 'higher education of women,' but Lady Fenella speaks the Queen's English in a clear, low voice. She dances well, and sings divinely. She was not presented because she has a rooted aversion to gaiety and London; but I venture to assert, had she courted to the Queen last spring, she would have been pronounced, with one voice, the belle of the season!"

"You had better add that you are in love with her," said Lord Arden, a little coldly. "I'm sure it seems like it."

Ira hesitated.

"If I had the slightest hope of winning her, rest assured I should have asked her to be my wife; but, in my opinion, Lady Fenella had given her heart away once and for ever before she crossed the threshold of Arden Court. Of course I may be mistaken, but I am convinced of it in my own mind."

He never mentioned the subject again till

they had landed in England; then he said, a little awkwardly,—

"I have a message for you!"

"From whom?"

"My cousin, Mrs. Dane. She wants us to spend a day or two at Foxgrove *en passant*. She is quite alone, except one guest whom you can hardly have forgotten—the girl we found in the moonlight just a year ago."

Noel looked startled.

"And her husband!"

"She has no husband. That was a mistake of Nan's. It seems the young lady wrote that she was happy, and had found her home; and Miss Nan, being very happy in her own wedded life, must needs jump to the conclusion Miss Nell was married."

"But I saw her with my own eyes. I heard her tell a man on Hastings Pier she was quite happy now since her wanderings were over, and she had found someone to love her."

"Did you see the man's face?"

"Do you suppose I wanted to?"

"I have heard the story," said Ira, with a break in his own voice. "It was the Thursday before last Christmas Day, the afternoon of the snowstorm, and she was poor, friendless, and, I think, destitute. Miss Judith Watts had turned her ruthlessly from the door out into the biting snow. Nina was out, or it could never have happened. Half-dazed with misery she wandered on and on until she lost her way, and found herself on the open common. Guided by the gas lamps she got to the road, and was leaning against the gate of a large, old, family mansion for support, when its owner alighted from a cab. She asked him to direct her to Pimlico; and he, struck by her weary air and chilled, trembling frame, took her into his warm, cheerful home for his sister to comfort. The sister recognised her at the first glance by her likeness to her mother—a much-loved friend. I am not clever like you, Noel; but I should say, if you asked me, the man you heard her speak to at Hastings was the dear old fellow who came to her rescue in the hour of her bitterest need. I know he and his sister would have liked to keep her with them always, that she loves them both dearly, but as they are nearly seventy I don't think there will ever be any chance of Nell calling them anything but friends."

"I think I've been an idiot!" said Noel, slowly. "All these months I've been wretched, believing I had lost her!"

"Well, hadn't you better accept Nan's invitation to Foxgrove, old fellow? Not but what if you refuse you have a goodly chance of meeting Miss Nell at the Court. She and Lady Fenella are inseparable."

Noel opened his eyes.

"Ah! you said she knew the Watts's too!"

"Yes; Nina Watts was another good Samaritan to her. I believe it was indirectly through that family she was introduced to your mother."

"And my mother likes her?"

"Lady Nora is equally fond of her niece and Nell. She makes not the least difference between them. Nell has been spending several months at Arden Court."

Even then no suspicion of the truth ever came to Lord Arden. He reached Foxgrove still in utter unconsciousness; and Mrs. Dane, meeting him in the hall, marvelled at her cousin Ira's excellent management.

"You are only just in time!" she said to Noel, with an arch smile. "Nell is going home next week!"

Noel looked at her gratefully.

"I can never thank you enough for your kind invitation!"

She took his hand in hers.

"Only forgive me for the mistake that helped to part you, and I shall be content. Would you like to go to your rooms, or will you see the conservatory?"

Ira settled the matter.

"Lord Arden will inspect the conservatory, Nan, and I will repair to your boudoir, and listen with speechless admiration to your relation of the latest achievements of Miss

Dane. That remarkable infant must, surely, have accomplished wonders since I left!"

Noel opened the conservatory. As he expected, was not empty. A girl stood there cutting flowers.

"Nell!"

"Lord Arden!"

That was all. Surely there must have been some strange affinity between their spirits? They had met once a year before, and in all the months since they had never been able to forget each other. Waking and sleeping, Nell's face had haunted Noel; waking and sleeping his voice had sounded in her ears.

The girl was the first to recover her composure. She, you must know, believed he knew her name and identity, so she spoke to him familiarly as a cousin.

"I am so glad you have come home!"

"But it is only for a little while. I must return to Germany at the end of the month. You know times have changed since we met."

Nell raised her blue eyes to his.

"You are changed," she said. "They told me you did not mind the loss of fortune, but I think you did."

"Shall I tell you what has changed me—the loss not of fortune, but of you. From the moment we parted I knew you were my destiny—you belonged to me, and I to you. Do you remember the twenty-fifth of November?"

"Perfectly!"

"That night I had a dream, and you appeared to me and asked me to help you. I seemed to know you were in dire peril, and I started for London the next day."

"That night!" she said, slowly, "I was knocked down by a cart and run over. They took me to the nearest hospital, but I was only stunned, not really injured, and in two or three days I was discharged. I remember the nurse told me the only words I spoke when I was at the worst were 'Noel help me!' and I know I seemed to see you standing by me as clearly as I see you now."

"Don't you think my case is proved?" asked Lord Arden, gravely. "Can you look me in the face, and tell me you don't think we were made for each other?"

"But you know nothing of me!" pleaded Nell. "You might have found me horrid."

"I am not afraid!"

"And—I thought you cared for some one," she whispered.

"I never cared for anyone but you. I sought you feverishly, despairingly; and one December day I found you at Hastings, only to discover, as I thought, that you belonged to another."

"Poor Uncle George!" said Nell, a little wickedly. "I think he would be surprised. Do you know?" her tone changing, "I think long, long ago he loved my grandmother, and that is why he has been so good to me!"

"And you live with him?"

It came to Nell then with a revelation that he did not know her to be Fenella Devenish, and was talking only to the little wail, Nell Briarley.

"I should if ever I needed a home; but just now I am living at Arden Court."

"With my cousin?"

"Yes!"

"Fenella must resign her companion, darling, for I want you. Little Nell, how soon will you come to me? How soon will you let me marry you?"

Nell blushed crimson.

"We can't be married," she said, quietly. "Why, people are always engaged first!"

"We are engaged now!" said Lord Arden, firmly, "in fact, in my opinion, we have been engaged ever since last September. I know I have been constant to you in thought ever since."

"Even in spite of Judith Watts's fascinations?"

He smiled.

"In spite of that. Do you know Mrs. Watts threatened to produce Lady Fenella unless I made Judy Countess of Arden? She

little knew that I was as anxious as herself to find my cousin."

"Were you really?"

"Can't you guess why?"

"Not in the least."

"I always thought I should find you some day, and I felt you did not care for wealth or position. I believed, Nell, I should have more chance of winning you if I came to you a poor man claiming your love as my chiefest good. Little one, was I right? Nell, will you put your hand in mine and promise to be my wife?"

"Are you quite sure?"

"Sure that I want you, sweetheart? Ay, that I am!"

"Because," whispered Nell, "I don't think I am the least fit for a Countess. Until last year I lived in a little cottage. Since that I have stood face to face with poverty. Would you like such a past history for your wife?"

"I am not like to think of the sorrows you have borne; but I do not view the matter in the least as you do. There is only one thing in the world that could make me give you up."

"And that?"

"Your loving someone else."

"I never shall. But I ought to tell you I was once engaged to someone else," and then she told him, with a blush, the part of her life when she had known Truscot Palmer.

"You never loved him!" It was not a question, but an assertion.

"I think I hated him."

"Then, Nell, we will never think of him again. Only, sweetheart, there are two questions I must get you to answer. Do you love me? Will you be my wife?"

She had answered both when, a few minutes later, in the distance a servant was seen approaching.

"Mistress sent me to tell you dinner is served, my lady. She begged you would not trouble to dress to-night."

Noel was in morning suit, Nell in a thick white cambric, so the last clause of the message was necessary to make them venture to appear as they were.

"What did she call you?" asked Noel suddenly, as though the idea had only just occurred to him. "My lady?"

"I think so."

One glance from her eyes to his, and there was nothing to explain.

"I thought you knew it when you came to me in the conservatory," she whispered. "Oh, Noel! promise you won't love me less because I am Fenella Devenish!"

Noel Lord Arden resigned his attachéship, and in the following October there was a very pretty wedding at the village church near Arden Court—a wedding which gave unmixed satisfaction to the bridegroom's mother, since it restored to her son his inheritance, and gave her for a daughter the girl she had learned to love as her own child.

George Harding, the Danes, Lord Brabourne, and Mr. and Mrs. Moselle know the true story of Fenella's marriage. The world at large regard it simply as a most suitable arrangement; but that troubled the happy couple but little.

It was Nan who dressed Fenella in her bridal robes, and Lord Brabourne who, at his own request, gave her away, nobly hiding his own pain lest it should shadow her felicity.

Two years have passed since that bridal day. The Earl and Countess are an "old married couple" now, but their love is bright and warm as when it was first spoken. Fenella is the honoured mistress of Arden Court; and Noel finds quite enough to occupy him in managing his estate, so that he meddles no more with either diplomacy or mines. He and his wife are popular with all who know them, and no house in Highshire is so pleasant to visit as at Arden Court.

There you will meet Nan and her children, (for "Miss Dane" has already two successors). There Nina Moselle and her husband come to

enjoy a breath of the country after the heat of London; and more than once they have been accompanied by the "Promoter of Companies," who finds life in Kennington very dreary, unsweetened by Nina's care.

Mrs. Watts died not long after her dis-appointment, and Judith went on the stage, where, it is feared, she will never rise beyond the rank of a "super." But the forty-fourth company was wonderful to relate, a success; so a wealth of prosperity has come to Nina's father at last, and he is able to provide comfortably for the education of the "fry"; and, by George Harding's advice, invested his share of the profits of that wonderful forty-fourth so safely that a moderate income will always be his, after which he retired from public life, and floated no more companies.

Miss Susan Harding gives an occasional eye to his very respectable housekeeper, as she and her brother met the widower at the Court, and took a liking to him.

Of one of our friend's future we cannot, alas! speak definitely. At thirty Lord Ira Brabourne is still a bachelor. His mother is dead; now he travels a great deal, and seems happiest when visiting at Arden Court. He still looks much younger than his age, a fact which confirms Lady Nora in a very strange little plot she has formed for his benefit. Unsuccessful as her matchmaking proved for Noel, she cannot quite relinquish her hobby, and has even employed her energy in the cause of the next generation.

There is a three-year-old girl in the Court nursery with blue eyes like her mother's. She has been christened Nell, and Lady Nora and Mrs. Dane always maintain that this blue-eyed child is some day to console Lord Brabourne for the wound her mother so innocently inflicted years ago.

It may be so, it may be not. Noel and his wife make no such distant plans. The present is all sufficient happiness for him. Only if the Earl does breathe a prayer as he looks into his first-born's eyes, it is that, unlike her mother, she may not need to walk a thorn-strewn path; while the Countess hopes that, if her little Nell ever lives to be a wife, she may meet with a husband as loyal and true, as unselfish and devoted as Noel Lord Arden.

[THE END.]

BETTER WOUND THAN KILL.—The idea begins to prevail in European armies that it is better to wound a man in battle than to kill him, as more men are taken out of line to care for a wounded man than for a dead one. Hence opinion at present favours a small bore for the magazine rifles now being introduced, and the average gauge adopted is about three-tenths of an inch only, instead of the half-inch gauge hitherto in use in Europe and in America. An advantage of the smaller bore is that the soldier can carry more rounds of ammunition. His gun also can be made lighter. The soldier, too, when consulted about the matter, prefers being shot twice to being killed once.

"LADY BRASSET," says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "lost her mother when she was little more than an infant, and from the time that she could walk and talk until she married, she and her father were inseparable. Her father had been a crack steeplechase rider in his younger days, as well as a 'wbip,' and his taste and talents for horsemanship descended to his daughter. When she was little more than five years old, Miss Allnutt and her white pony were well known to the country round Penshurst. Her paternal great-grandfather had owned South Park, near Penshurst, now the seat of Lord Hardinge, and her father was, at the time referred to, constantly among his relatives in that district. As a girl she was one of the leading beauties of two London seasons, and there was no better seat or 'hands' than hers to be seen in the row."



Jan. 21, 1888.

## IN HOPE.

LIFE is not all a golden way,  
Set round with blooming flowers,  
And what we long for may not fill  
With sweet delight the hours—  
Clouds will o'ercast the skies of all  
And hide away the blue;  
But, if we wait in patient hope,  
The sunshine will break through.

Life is too short to grieve and fret,  
Too short to spend in fears,  
And there's too much of needful toil  
To give much time for tears.  
And, when our hands and hearts are full  
Of what we find to do,  
Our hours of loneliness will be  
But very, very few.

Work is a blessing God ordained,  
To do it with our might  
While yet the day of life is here,  
Before the fall of night  
Behoves us all; and, when we go,  
All silent, one by one,  
Happy we'll be to know we'll hear  
The welcome sound: "Well done."

C. A.

## DRIVEN TO WRONG.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.—(continued.)

THE excitement in the town was very great as the Rector was carried through it. The people crowded to the doors and windows, some already in their night-clothes, all eager to learn the truth of the story; but even the roughest men are good-hearted when there is trouble and pain to be borne, holding the Englishman's doctrine that you should never kick a man when he is down.

Rose D'Arcy was terrified when Jane rushed to her with the news that the Rector had been found very ill in the pine woods, and his disordered appearance certainly did not reassure her, as she ran into the hall, and saw him in the midst of the motley crew there assembled. All her nervousness, all her fears of the night before, returned to her with redoubled force, and she wrung her hands together pitiably. She longed for the presence of Mrs. Charlton; but not even her fears could make her face her guardian's displeasure, as only forty-eight hours before he had prohibited all intercourse with the little widow.

Suddenly the thought of Dr. King came as an inspiration to her, and Jane ran, without even stopping to put on her bonnet, to his house, and gave so breathless and incomprehensible an account of what had happened that the medico had very little hope of finding Mr. Hilhouse alive; and he returned with the parlour-maid in no less haste than she had shown in going to summon him, and with his appearance all confusion ceased.

Everybody in Market Glenton loved and trusted the doctor, and he quickly issued orders, taking everything into his own hands. And in less than a quarter of an hour the Rector was in his own bed, with a good fire roaring up the chimney, and restoratives had been administered, which brought back some consciousness as he possessed, for it soon became evident that although he submissively obeyed the doctor's orders, Mr. Hilhouse's mind was in a very wandering condition.

Dr. King quickly discovered the dislocation, and attended to it with his usual skill and promptitude; but the Rector had taken a severe chill, and rheumatic fever was the consequence.

He either was not aware of the absence of his daughters, or had no desire to see them near him, for he never, by word or deed, expressed any wish for their presence.

Rose D'Arcy was his nurse and constant companion; and when in his moments of consciousness his eyes rested on her he smiled, and he would take her hand into his own, and she never once withdrew it from his clasp.

His suffering, and it was very great, made her very compassionate to him.

The womanhood within her was aroused, and she tended him with gentleness and tenderness, praying for his recovery with earnest words. He grew very dear to her in those days of his dependence upon her, which lengthened into weeks before he was able to leave his bed.

But at last Dr. King gave permission for him to sit up, and Rose arranged his large chair in the window, in the winter sunshine, that he might look out into the garden.

It was the last week in January, and Nell and her husband had returned to Market Glenton, and when the young wife heard of her father's sufferings in the pine wood and since, and remembered how she and Laurence had given him the slip there, she was filled with penitence and regret, and determined to go and crave his pardon, come what might, for her foolish and disobedient conduct towards him, and to express her regret at the accident which had overtaken him.

Rose, worn out with her duties as nurse, had left Mr. Hilhouse with one of his good books for company by the window, wrapped in furs and eiderdown quilts, and had gone to rest upon her bed when Nell rang at the Rector's bell.

"Lor! Miss Nellie, who would have thought of seeing you?" cried Jane. "Why, we heard that you had run away with Mr. Travers."

"Hush!" returned she, with a smile. "I'm afraid it's true. I am married, Jane, and what is more, I don't regret it; only I am so sorry about papa. Is he any better?"

"He has been mortal bad, miss; ma'am, I beg your pardon, but he's sitting up to-day for the first time."

"Do you think he would see me, Jane?" inquired Nell, wistfully.

"I shouldn't ask if I had a mind to. I should just walk in as if nothing had happened," said the girl, wisely.

Mrs. Laurence Travers hesitated, but at length took courage.

"I think I will go up," she said, and suited the action to the word.

Mr. Hilhouse looked up as she entered the room, and a black scowl crossed his face. She came over and took his hand, and looked upon his worn features.

"I'm so sorry you have been ill, papa," she said, gently. "I knew nothing of it until last night, or I should have come before."

A shade of deep anger settled in his face. "You and that young man played a very wicked trick upon me," he cried, hotly, "and have very nearly lost me my life. He's an impertinent scoundrel, and I will permit no intercourse whatever between you."

"Oh! father, surely you know, surely you have heard, that we are married!" she said, sinking upon her knees beside him. "We knew nothing of your illness till we returned home last night, and I have come to ask you to forgive us both. Oh! do, do—do papa," she pleaded.

He stared at her in blank amazement. "You are married!" he cried, "and venture here to tell me so! You have dared disobey me, and come into my presence again, Ellen? How old are you?"

She paled visibly, and bent her head not to meet his eyes.

"Forgive me, father. I loved Laurence, and could not do without him; indeed, I couldn't," she faltered.

"You are under age; your marriage is not legal, and I will place the matter in my solicitor's hands," he said, with ill-suppressed passion. "Mr. Travers will find I am not a man to be trifled with. He shall not go unpunished."

"Oh! father, you wouldn't, you couldn't,"

act so cruel a part! If I had thought so, I would not have sued for your forgiveness," cried Nell, springing to her feet.

"Forget you have done so," he answered, coldly. "Mrs. Laurence Travers—I wish you good-day," and he pointed sternly to the door.

For a moment his daughter stood irresolute, then she swept from the room with anger and indignation combined; and when Dr. King called a few minutes later he found his patient restless, feverish, and excited.

"Come, this won't do," he said, soothingly. "I shall not allow you to sit up if it has this effect upon you;" and he laid his hand on his patient's pulse.

But Mr. Hilhouse shook it off irritably.

"I suppose you, like the rest, have been keeping things from me," he said, with a scowl.

"Certainly!" acknowledged the doctor. "A patient's health is the first consideration with the medical man; but what have you heard to vex you this afternoon, old friend? Is it about Nellie or Marion?"

The Rector cast a penetrating glance at Dr. King.

"What have you to tell me about Marion?" he asked, cunningly.

"That she is a noble and true woman; who, having received a bitter disappointment, so far as her earthly happiness is concerned, has determined, by trying to help others in their suffering, to find that peace which she had lost," answered the doctor, reverently. "I do not agree with her views," he continued, slowly, "but every one must be guided by their own conscience. We cannot answer for each other's thoughts and feelings, and you must give your daughter credit for the best motives in the action she has taken."

"What has she done?" inquired the Rector, feebly, for the rebellion of both his daughters in one day was almost too much for him in his weak state.

"She has become a Sister of Mercy," replied Dr. King; "and as a medical man, I can answer for the good work done by such noble, devoted women. Nevertheless, I wish she had remained at home, for she was very dear to us all, and we can ill spare her."

The Rector's jaw worked, and he showed very decided symptoms of agitation.

"Both daughters lost in one day!" he groaned; "both lost—it is well that my poor Emma did not live to see it!"

"Nonsense, lost! Forgive them both, Hilhouse, and although neither of them can return to you quite as they were before, having both undertaken other life duties, still they need scarcely be less comfort to you, and, in truth, the fact of being parted from them for a time, will make you feel that they are far dearer to you than you ever dreamed."

"Doctor," returned the Rector, sternly, "I cannot allow even you to dictate to me as regards my daughters. I know what is due to myself as a father, and as the Rector of this parish. I cannot countenance wrong-doing, even in members of my own family. Both my daughters have deserted me without a word, caring nothing what my feelings would be at their unexplained disappearance. It is no merit of theirs that I knew nothing of their wickedness."

"That, sir, cannot be laid at Marion's door, at any rate," replied the doctor, and gave Mr. Hilhouse the girl's letter and the history of his having opened it, at the same time begging him to exonerate him from blame for having done so under the circumstances of the case.

"I believe you meant no harm, King," replied the Rector, stiffly; "but it is not a thing I should have done myself."

And Dr. King rose impatiently, and for a moment he told himself that it was a pity he had taken so much trouble to save the life of so churlish an individual, and he went off with a decided show of temper.

"Jane," he said, as the girl came to let him out, "when Miss Rose is awake tell her it is time Mr. Hilhouse went to bed; getting up has not suited his bile."

And he swung off in a decidedly irritable condition, and came in contact with Mrs. Charlton at a sudden angle of the street, who at once noticed his state of mind.

"Hallo doctor!" she laughed, looking up at him with a pair of saucy grey eyes. "I see, Genus Urea Major—disease, abrasion of the cuticle of the pericranium," she said, trying to look grave.

"Abrasion of the fiddlestick's end! Mrs. Charlton. It is so like a woman to rub in a little caustic to a sore place!"

"It does good sometimes, does it not?" she asked, with no show of annoyance; "and it's so like a man when he knows he is of the savage beast type, to say spiteful things of the other sex."

"Yes! I am savage, I've cause to be; the Rector is enough to provoke—"

"Don't pose for the saint," cried Elsie, beseechingly, "the part won't suit you a bit! Is there anything I can do?"

"Come, that's more sensible. Yes; go to old Slowcombe, and wheedle him into being Laurence Travers' friend. I've seen poor little Nell, and never liked her so well as now she's in trouble. There are rocks ahead for her and the poor young fellow. She tells me her father means to punish him for having made a false statement of her age, and he can do it, if he likes."

"Oh, but he wouldn't do such a thing, for Nellie's sake!" cried Elsie, indignantly.

"Wouldn't he? I wish they had left him in the pine woods; we could have done very well without him!"

"You're not well, doctor," returned Elsie, the mischief chasing the grave look from her brow, "I never knew you murderous before."

"Well, I feel so now; and it's absurd of you to stand there grinning, as though nothing were the matter."

"Be sure I'll do all I can," she said, good-humouredly. "But I can't draw a long face to-day, for I've heard from Marion, and she writes contentedly, and Cecil is on his way home!"

## CHAPTER XL.

MRS. CHARLTON MANAGES THE LAWYER AND THE BANKER.

MR. HILHOUSE lost no time in sending for Mr. Slowcombe, and placed the matter of Laurence Travers in his hands; and the solicitor had too much sense to attempt to contradict him, or combat his opinion in this early stage of his parental wrath; nevertheless, he did not mean to let the Rector proceed with the case if he could help it, and he went off to his brother's house to talk the affair over with him, and see if, between them, they could hit upon any plan by which Laurence could be saved from the penalty of his rash declaration. When he reached his destination, he found Elsie Charlton closeted with his brother, and showed signs of retiring at once, for there was a confidential manner between them which made him think they were talking secrets.

"Don't go, Tom," said Josias, "don't go; perhaps you can help us with your good advice. We were talking of young Travers and his little wife. Mrs. Charlton informs me they are in a serious scrape, and we must stand by them—we must, indeed. You see, the young lady was not of age, and her husband stated that she was. Very wrong of him, of course, my dear Tom, very wrong; but then you see he couldn't have got her without, and as Mrs. Charlton has been reminding me, we were all young and foolish once ourselves."

"And one of us is still the former, though decidedly not the latter," said the lawyer, with the stiffest of bows, and the most ceremonious politeness.

"I don't know," laughed Elsie. "If anyone had to tell my age, Mr. Slowcombe, they wouldn't get themselves into a scrape for stating me to be over one-and-twenty, and I'm truly sorry for Mr. Travers. Is he really open to be punished?"

"I'm afraid so," answered the old man, slowly. "I'm afraid so; but I think the Rector might be managed, and if any one can do it, Mrs. Charlton, you are the woman."

"Oh, dear! I'm grieved to say I'm out of it. I have lost favour with Mr. Hilhouse; for, do you know, Mr. Slowcombe, I have taken the liberty of accepting the Rector's son," she answered, archly.

"So I heard, my dear lady, and our old friend must be in a very jaundiced state not to feel satisfaction at such a union. I congratulate you upon gaining the affection of so good a fellow as Cecil Hilhouse; and as to the reverse of the picture, I congratulate the gentleman still more. Had my son been the bridegroom-elect, I should have been proud—really proud!" and he rose and bowed to her with his hand upon his heart. She arose too, and dropped him an old-world courtesy; then, the quaint act over, she possessed herself of his hand on the one side, and that of the old banker on the other.

"Now," she said, in a business-like way, "what are we going to do?"

"I am instructed to take proceedings against Mr. Travers," acknowledged the lawyer. "I have just come from the Rectory, where I held an interview with Mr. Hilhouse, and I regret to say I found him very irate."

"I am sorry, Tom, very sorry!" cried the banker; "for I feel I am partly to blame myself. Had I not broken through my rules, and given the young man leave, he could not have carried off Miss Nell, and married her. But that poor woman's cough was too much for me; it was, indeed!"

"Is it better?" inquired Mrs. Charlton, kindly.

"Decidedly. She's a nice creature. I went in to see her last night!"

"Then you have nothing to regret, Mr. Slowcombe—nothing whatever?"

"Nevertheless, it is unwise to break through rules. If once laid down, they should be as the laws of the Medes and Persians—unalterable. You create a precedent by such weakness, Josias," lectured the lawyer.

But Elsie cut in upon his speech.

"You're instructed to take proceedings against Mr. Travers," she said, with an arch look at him. "But now, come, acknowledge you have not the faintest idea of doing anything of the kind; and you know it."

Mr. Slowcombe coughed, and cleared his throat in a very business-like way.

"But my dear lady, client's wishes have to be followed out, believe me," he asserted; but without much spirit, for Elsie had found him out, and he was aware of it.

"Of course they must, unless they can be cleverly overcome—cleverly, mind."

"I'm afraid it would be beyond my powers," returned the old man with a smile at the compliment. "You flatter me, my dear Mrs. Charlton."

"Not a bit of it. You and Mr. Josias can work the whole thing splendidly, if only you will."

"Of course we will, if you will tell us how!" cried the banker, heartily.

"Only supply us with brains," said the lawyer, submissively; "and we'll carry out your views."

"Now, I call this cozy," laughed Elsie, with a bright and happy look. "Mr. Josias, the burthen of the affair lies upon your shoulders. Can you act well?"

"Never tried in my life," he confessed. "But I thought my Matilda was 'A I' for a beginner; so perhaps the talent may run in the family," he replied, amusedly.

"I shall never forget that night, and the Rector's return. I was not at the schools on that especial evening, as you are aware; but I saw enough of his temper to be able to credit all I heard of what happened there."

"Well, I don't want you to go on the stage. I want you to go to the Rectory, and to pretend the most intense indignation against Mr. Travers for having enjoyed you into giving him

leave, and to tell Mr. Hilhouse that you have turned him out of the bank."

Both the brothers looked at her aghast.

"But I should have to do it if I said that," objected Josias. "I like Travers, and have no wish to ruin him."

"Of course not! Nevertheless, you are going to turn him out, and he must leave Market Glenton, and no one must know where he is gone! Mr. Slowcombe must send in a long bill for looking for him, &c., &c., and can give the money he receives to a charity! Mr. Hilhouse does not like long bills, and will be the more willing to listen to the voice of the charmer, meaning yours," continued Elsie, with a bright nod at the old attorney, who nodded back as though he were pulled by a string attached to her.

"You can then suggest that Laurence Travers has been punished enough by the loss of his position, and being hunted from the parish. Let him think we have had a sort of 'drumming out,' you know, as they do with the naughty soldiers who are not a credit to their cloth. Make him out a moral leper, my friend, and persuade the Rector, in his own style of language, that justice has overtaken him, even if law has not been used as the lever of his ruin. Congratulate him that he has been punished without his aid, and tell him that some one answering to his description has sailed for the Fiji Islands, and will, without doubt, be very shortly served up as a dainty dish to the King of the Cannibals. What better revenge could even the Rector of Market Glenton require?"

The two old men broke into peals of merriment.

"Mrs. Charlton, you're a wonderful woman!" cried the banker. "I believe your plot would work, I do, indeed, and I am ready to carry out my part of it. But have you, in the meantime, considered what is to become of the young man himself?"

"Of course I have!" she retorted.

"Trust her, trust her! She'll not do the thing by halves," chuckled the solicitor.

"Mrs. Charlton, I'd take you into partnership to-morrow gladly, that I would; and, what is more, I would act under your advice too, and believe in its soundness!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted brother Josias, slapping his leg heartily; and Elsie couldn't help thinking what a very great change had come over him, since she first came to Market Glenton.

Not that she put the alteration in him down to her own influence.

She knew that it was Mr. Gresham who had taught the banker "good and evil," and that he would never return to his original hum-drum ideas, as he had done as one of the "shining lights" of Market Glenton.

He shone very decidedly still, but there was very little blue light left in the life-flame of the respectable old banker.

"I would accept your professional offer with pleasure," she laughed, "if I had not taken the Queen's shilling, with Cecil as my recruiting sergeant. There are lady doctors, and why should there not be lady lawyers?"

"Because they would let out their clients' secrets," almost shouted the banker. "Better come to me, Mrs. Charlton, and be my bank manager!"

"I'll report you both to Cecil, and tell him you have been flirting with me horribly!" she cried. "And now, back to business. What is the name of that London banker who is a friend of yours?" she asked with a random shaft; for she had never heard of any such friend.

"Oh! Greenslade, you mean!" he answered, innocently, falling into the trap.

"Just so," she returned, coolly. "You're going to get Laurence Travers into Mr. Greenslade's bank, and that without delay. In fact, you're going to run up to London to-night and see about it. You know him quite well enough to get a bed at his house."

"That's true, my dear lady; but how on earth did you know of our acquaintance?"



"I didn't!" she returned, wickedly. "That is where the joke comes in, my friend. I only thought you were sure to have such a chum; probably you were at school together?"

"So we were, so we were!" he returned, looking at her in astonishment, while the old lawyer rubbed his hands together in enjoyment of the situation.

"Cute, 'one!" he murmured. "An invaluable ally!"

Thus it came about that Mr. Slowcombe really did go up to London that very night, and returning the next morning had an interview with his brother and Mrs. Charlton; after which, and a lunch at the "Nest," which included a bottle of champagne of one of the finest brands, he started for the Rector, and acted the part assigned to him with such good effect that the Rector's indignation was nowhere, when compared to that of the banker, who was indignant for his friend's sake, as well as his own, and vehemently expressed his determination that the miscreant should not remain a single day in his service!

And that night, Laurence Travers, with his wife and mother, left Market Clenton behind to begin a new life in the great metropolis.

And all his friends thought he was a very lucky fellow to get so quickly out of a parish which he would undoubtedly have found too hot to hold him!

Mr. Hilhouse's vengeance seemed for the time satisfied, and then he had the pleasing anticipation that Mr. Slowcombe, senior, was finishing the work of ruin, so splendidly begun by Josias.

Mr. Hilhouse had intended getting rid of the latter gentleman as his churchwarden, but the desire vanished now, and he once more regarded him as one of his very best of friends. So apt a pupil was Mr. Josias!

To return to the day of Nell's defeat at her father's hands. As soon as Dr. King left the house he furiously rang his hand-bell, and sent Jane off for Mr. Slowcombe, to whom he gave such instructions as we have already heard of.

Rose D'Arcy, having reappeared upon the scene, was going into her guardian's room, when hearing angry voices and words she stopped short at his door, and caught enough of the conversation to tell her that Nell and Laurence Travers were the subject being discussed, and not wishing to be an eaves-dropper she went away again unseen, and going downstairs rang for afternoon tea; but she did not stay to partake of it.

She heard of Nell's visit, and received the doctor's message from Jane; then, without a word, she put on her hat and slipped out into the street and ran up to the Travers' lodging to see Nell, whom she really loved, and found her in such grief and trouble at what had happened, and in such fear about her husband, that she was quite upset; and disregarding all other ideas, she ran straight on to Mrs. Charlton's house with her story, and throwing herself into the little widow's arms, burst into a flood of tears, and brokenly sobbed out the tale of Nellie's woes.

Elsie held her by the hands and smiled at her reassuringly.

"Don't fret so, little woman!" she said. "It will all come right, I hope. I will do my best for Nell, and so must you. Use your gentlest influence upon the Rector, Rose, and try to soften him. Those blue eyes ought to be good pleaders, but don't make yourself miserable, there's a good child. I am so happy that I can't bear others to be sorrowful. Cecil will be home in a few days now. I wonder how he and Mr. Hilhouse will get on!" she added, somewhat sadly, and Rose made up her mind to try and help someone besides Nell with Mr. Hilhouse. So she kissed Mrs. Charlton, and ran all the way home.

Mr. Slowcombe was gone, and she went to the Rector's room as soon as she had taken

off her things. And she looked so fresh and pretty after the crisp air that her brightness for the moment chased the gloom from her guardian's face.

"Your sleep has done you good, Rose?" he said, kindly.

"Yes, it has!" she replied, saying nothing of her walk, yet feeling guilty for suppressing it from him. "But you are tired, dear guardy! Shall I help you back to bed?"

"Presently, my child; but Rose, I am in trouble. I have been so upset; both my daughters have deserted me, my dear, and I have no one but you. Tell me, Rose, darling, that you will not leave me too!" he cried, in agitation.

She stood for a moment in painful confusion. She had never yet been able to make up her mind whether she should accept his offer, and she wondered if this was his way of asking for her decision.

He looked so pitifully at her, however; that her heart was touched by his sorrow, and she leant over him and pressed her lips to his brow.

"No, I will not leave you," she answered, gently. "Try and be happy; endeavour to get well, dear Mr. Hilhouse, and we will see what can be done to set things straight."

"Heaven bless you, my dear!" he said, really gratefully. "My little Rose, do not fear; we shall be very happy!"

And Rose shrank back, seeing that she had put her head into the noose.

"Perhaps I can help them," she murmured to herself, and let him take her in his arms and kiss her.

## CHAPTER XL.

### THE FAVOUR WHICH ROSE D'ARCY ASKED.

ROSE D'ARCY kept her word, and when, some time later, Mr. Hilhouse spoke to her about a definite engagement to him, she placed her hand in his bravely, and drawing a stool to his feet, she looked up in his face with earnest eyes.

"Dear guardian," she said, in a low voice, "I want to make you all happy—I do, indeed. I am very proud that you have chosen me out of all the world to help you with your life's duties, and I do hope I shall prove that you have chosen rightly; but I have a favour to ask you before I definitely promise to be your wife. You will not refuse it, dear, will you?"

"Refuse it, my sweet Rose! You may trust to my love, surely!" he answered, assuming a very lover-like air, and stroking the bright, fair hair of the girl.

"I will," she replied. "We could never be happy together unless we do trust each other implicitly, I feel sure; and, dear Mr. Hilhouse, if you do what I ask you now, I will promise to trust you always, and to bring my troubles and my joys to you, whatever they may be, and you will bring yours to me too, will you not?"

"Of course I will, dear child. We will begin as we mean to go on. Let me hear your little request, Rose, and then we can talk of how soon we can be married."

She smiled at him bravely.

"We must help others to be happy first, dear!" she whispered; "and then we shall be able to enjoy happiness ourselves. Dear guardian, I couldn't be contented with the brightest life, if I knew others whom I love were miserable."

"You are a gentle-hearted girl, Rose!" he said, a smile of satisfaction creeping over his features. "That is just the spirit my poor lost Emma always displayed; I am glad to see you emulating her."

"I could not take a better model," answered Rose, with a half-sad look, for little as she felt towards Mr. Hilhouse in the light of a lover, it seemed strange to her that he should woo her through the medium of a dead wife.

It appeared to her that however dear Mrs. Hilhouse had been to them both, now that she was to be put into her place they should

cease to talk of her, but she said nothing of her thoughts to the Rector.

"And now, Rose, for your request," he said, cheerfully; "whatever it may be, it is granted before you ask it."

"Now that is kind of you," she answered, enthusiastically. "I want you to let me order round the carriage which you have to take you out now every fine day, and to drive with me up to the 'Nest,' to call upon Mrs. Charlton and Cecil. I know I am asking a good deal of you, but you see I believe in your affection, and I know you will do it for my sake. It makes me really miserable that you and Cecil are not friends, and to feel that your anger against him is chiefly because he didn't care to have me for his wife. Guardian, dear," she added, as she saw by his face how unpalatable her words were; "guardian, dear, I wish you to remember that if Captain Hilhouse had wanted me, I could not have been your wife; so that after all he has acted as you should wish—oh, dear—for you wouldn't care to be without your little Rose now, would you?"

And the blue eyes were turned up so pleadingly to the Rector that he was melted.

"Heaven forbid!" he ejaculated, fervently.

"I could not do without my little Rose. My little Rose!" he repeated, dwelling upon the last words unobtrusively. "We will not talk of doing without each other. I had not looked at it in that light before. Had Cecil married you, you could not have cheered my life; it has after all been ordained for our good, even though I considered him stubborn and disobedient."

"And you will forgive them quite, and you will promise me to marry them yourself in your own dear old church, where it is right your son should be wedded; and let them begin their new life without a cloud to overshadow or darken it. They love one another very truly, I am sure, and they both deserve to be happy. I think Mrs. Charlton one of the best of women; she is ever ready to do good, without any ostentation."

The Rector sorewed up his brow and his lips, as though he had eaten some decidedly sour grapes, but he only remarked—

"The little girl who pleads for Mrs. Charlton is worth a dozen of her. Everyone to his taste; but she would not do for my wife! If Cecil does not object to the peccadilloes of the woman he is going to marry, it is no affair of mine; but the people here say her conduct with that objectionable man, Gresham, was perfectly unpardonable."

"Nevertheless, my dear, I will take you to call upon my son and his fiancée, since you so greatly desire it, and I will consent to perform the ceremony; but that must satisfy you, Rose. I do not wish Mrs. Charlton to visit at my house more than is absolutely necessary. She is not a good example for you, although my poor Emma was. Of course you are aware that even my misguided boy has been talked of with Mrs. Charlton—in fact, my dear, I look upon her as a decidedly dangerous little woman; and there is no knowing where she may lure people out of the path of duty and honour," and he closed his mouth with a snap, as though he had entirely settled the subject, but Rose would not have it so.

"Oh! indeed, you do not do her justice, dear Mr. Hilhouse," she exclaimed, warmly. "Elsie Charlton is a woman in a thousand one standing quite alone."

"Rose, you are too young and too inexperienced in evil and the ways of the world to understand such an adept in deceit as her of whom we speak, I am thankful to say. I will do as you ask me, my dear; but you must not expect me to like or respect her, were she twice Cecil's wife. If he will marry her, it is as well that the world should know that I countenance it; but for all that, I consider it a trouble, a humiliating trouble."

"You will like her better when you see that she makes your son happy," she answered, gently. "And now, how early shall I order the carriage?"

"When you please; but you must wait first and tell me when I am to be made happy as well as Cecil?"

"Are you not so now?" she inquired, smiling at him.

"Not quite," he admitted. "Rose, I want you for my own. When shall we be married, my dear?"

"Oh! when you like—when you think it will be right," she returned, her fair face covered with blushes, and her eyes downcast. "I am willing to leave it in your hands. I do not forget how you have cared for the poor orphan girl, and I am very grateful to you, believe me, dear Mr. Hilhouse; but for you I should be alone in the world and unfriended. I do not forget it, indeed, and hope I never shall," and she laid her hand impulsively in his.

"I am sure you never will, my child!" he returned, benignly; "and what little I have been able to do for you has been a great pleasure to me, I assure you; in return, you must do something to please me."

"Indeed, I will if I can."

"You can," he replied, still smiling at her; "at least, I think there can be no difficulty about it. My dear, you must call me *James*!"

"Oh! yes, certainly, when you wish it. But wouldn't everybody know if I did?"

"Perhaps—it might be wiser not to do it yet in public! but in private you can begin at once, dear!"

"Yes, James," she said, submissively, and quite started at the sound of it herself, and felt almost scared.

He was so much older than she was, and she had looked upon him in the light of a father now for so long, that to call him by his Christian name seemed an unwarrantable liberty on her part, and a lack of respect; nevertheless, she obeyed him.

"That is much better, my dear," he said, patting her cheek. "Now you may order the carriage if you like."

So, an hour later, they entered Mrs. Charlton's gate, and were ushered into her presence and that of Captain Hilhouse.

One glance of surprise passed between them; then Elsie went forward gracefully, and Cecil followed her lead, and she extended her hand as though nothing had happened.

"I am glad to see you better, Mr. Hilhouse, and able to get about again," she said kindly, leading him to the most comfortable of her luxurious chairs. "Rose! you are looking pale, after your arduous duties of nurse;" and she kissed the girl affectionately.

"She has been very good to me," said the Rector, his eyes resting so tenderly on her as to make the accusation of pallor just made by Mrs. Charlton an error.

"I think nursing must agree with Miss D'Arcy," laughed Captain Hilhouse, "I never saw her more blooming!"

"It must have been the light!" answered Elsie, meekly; but the mischief in her eyes made the blushes deeper still.

"Well, father, I am very glad to meet you again," continued Cecil, drawing a chair to his side; "and you are looking more yourself than I expected to see you, after the ugly time I hear you have had of it. I was sorry you wouldn't see me when I called, but now I conclude it is all right."

"Rose is the peace-maker," returned Mr. Hilhouse, with a smile at her. "It is all her doing!"

Mrs. Charlton squeezed the girl's hand with warmth under the cover of her fur cloak, and Cecil regarded her kindly.

"Miss Rose, we are much indebted to you," he said, "and we thank you very much."

"Oh! you can't think how glad I am to see you friends again," she replied, nervously twining her fingers together. "We want to know when you are to be married, dear Mrs. Charlton?"

Elsie looked at Cecil, and he back at her. The subject had been under discussion when their visitors had been announced, and they had just given up the idea of the possibility of

the ceremony taking place at Market Glendon; and had come to the conclusion that Cecil must take a room in the nearest village, and sleep there the legally-appointed number of days, or that they must indulge in a special licence, and they had not quite decided which to do, when their conversation had been broken in upon.

"Well, you see!" said Cecil, plainly and truthfully, "we meant to have made a short business of it. I thought my father would tie us up as soon as possible; but lately we have been trying to make other arrangements."

"You have only to name the day, and I will perform the ceremony," returned the Rector, in his stiffest tone.

"Really! you mean that?" cried Cecil, enthusiastically clasping his not too willing hand.

"Certainly!"

"Then, Elsie, darling, how soon can you be ready? There is nothing to wait for now. I would rather be married in old Market Glendon church than anywhere else in the world."

"Shall we say this day week?" asked Mrs. Charlton, a wild-rose hue creeping over the ivory whiteness of her complexion.

"That will suit me excellently," cried Cecil, in joyous accents.

"And me!" added the Rector, in a solemn, not to say sulky, tone.

Then he turned to Elsie, and asked her what she intended to do with her pretty home?

"I hardly know at present," she acknowledged, "but the stabling is so good I think it would let at a high rental for a hunting-box. You see I have it on lease, and the furniture is my own, so that if I have the luck to let it for the season I shall not unfurnish it, for it would pay me well; and, in the summer, if we can get to England, we shall have a home to come to."

"We shall not get much more leave this year, Elsie," laughed the soldier. "You see I cannot have it just when I like."

"Of course not; but I have the 'Nest' for five years more on my hands, and I think we may hope for a holiday before the expiration of that date! May we not?"

"Rather!" he laughed.

"Well! I don't expect to have any difficulty in letting it every season. Men are only too glad to get hunting-boxes in the Midlands, and I hope it will help our income a little."

"It is to be hoped so," struck in the Rector, dryly.

"Come into the conservatory and see my camellias, Rose," suggested Elsie, and taking the girl's hand they went off together.

"Oh! they are beauties!" cried Rose, admiringly.

"Of course they are, little woman, and you shall have as many as you like. But I didn't really bring you here to talk of them, my child, but to thank you, Rose. This is all your doing, I know! I said your blue eyes would be good pleaders, but don't let them be too eloquent, for although it is possible to be an old man's darling, yet I do not believe it possible for any woman, however perfect, to be Mr. Hilhouse's darling! So I thought I would give you a word of warning in season. You will one day meet your fate, child, so be content to wait till your true love comes. There! I don't look so uncomfortable, Rose, or I shall be sorry I broached the subject; but I don't want you to go and lay up misery for yourself by rushing blindfold into an entanglement from which you may one day pine with heart-weariness to escape. I did not mean to hurt or vex you, dear, believe me; but young girls are only too ready to accept responsibilities which they do not comprehend, and often find too heavy a burthen to carry, and I want to save you, Rose!"

But Rose D'Arcy only hung her head, and the rosy cheeks paled. She felt how much truth there was in her friend's words, and yet she knew it was now too late for her to draw back.

She could only hope that she had decided

rightly. But she could admit Elsie neither her hopes nor her fears, for she had promised Mr. Hilhouse to leave all in his hands, and to follow out his wishes, and she was well aware that he desired silence for the present.

"Forgive me, Rose!" continued Elsie; "if you think I have taken a greater liberty than our friendship warrants; but, my dear, I know what a loveless marriage is, and I would preserve anyone I love from such a fate!"

"You love me, then?" inquired the girl, like a very child.

"I do; and I want you to promise that if ever you are in trouble—if ever you need a friend, you will apply to me without hesitation."

"I will, indeed!" answered Rose, and giving Elsie both her hands, she put up her cherry lips to seal the compact.

A country wedding is a very pretty sight. Very different from one in town, where even the next-door neighbours take no interest whatever in the proceedings unless they happen to be personal friends. And the invited guests only are present at the church unless you are some very important personage indeed, and then, of course, you must pay for the honour, whether it be pleasant or no.

In the country people have so little to amuse them, except the business of their neighbours, that, although the family interested may make arrangements to have the quietest of quiet weddings, they cannot really accomplish it, for everyone knows what everybody else does. And, although they may keep the day appointed for the ceremony a profound secret from everyone but the parson, and he may be thoroughly reliable, still he must inform the clerk and the pew-opener, and both have a large circle of friends; and, although they may mention no names, still everyone knows who is going to be married!

And the dressmaker, if you employ a local one, is quite aware the broadest margin you can give her to send home your costume is the day before the ceremony, and fully understands your fidgeting her every day about it. And should you buy everything out of the place, to keep tongues quiet, there are always sure to be satin ribbons needed at the last moment to betray you! And, moreover, the domestic servants cannot keep secrets from the butcher's and grocer's young men. So that everyone is always ready with their bridal greetings, as Elsie and Cecil found on the morning of their wedding day.

The old town was lined with arches of evergreens, and bright-hued flags, for both the bride and bridegroom were especial favourites in the parish. The ancient church was crowded to overflowing with spectators and well-wishers. The organ pealed out the wedding-march and the bells rang forth joyously; and Trusty, who was shut up at the "Nest," made his escape, and, scrambling through the crowd into church, sat deliberately down behind the couple being united, with his head on one side, watching the ceremony as though he heartily approved of the transaction.

(To be continued.)

Be cheerful; do not brood over fond hopes unrealized, until a chain, link after link, is fastened on each thought and wound around the heart. Nature intended you to be the fountain-spring of cheerfulness and social life, and not the travelling monument of despair and melancholy.

FATAL TO PEACE.—The wife who gets into the way of contradicting and "checking" her husband, of opposing him in small things and standing out in large: the husband who is sneering, contemptuous, tyrannical, fault-finding—perhaps neither side knowing the whole extent of its folly, but just giving way to it as more easy than to fight and conquer it—these young people are doing their best to dig the grave of their married peace.



## LADY LILITH.

—X—

## CHAPTER XXIV.

LYNDHURST'S progress towards health was very slow; for some reason or other he seemed to have lost all energy, and one day Doctor Symes said to him, rather impatiently,—

"You don't try to get well, Mr. Lyndhurst; you won't eat or drink, or take medicine, so how in the name of Fortune do you think I can cure you?"

Colin smiled enigmatically, but made no other reply to the query; indeed, he sometimes wondered whether it would not have been better both for him and Lilith if the bullet had proved fatal, for then there would have been an end of this miserable "striving to forget"—his never-ceasing pain, as the remembrance of his wife's treachery occurred to him. Not, let it be well understood, that he imagined for one moment that she was an accessory to the fact of his intended assassination. Of this he believed her to be innocent, but he had no doubt that her love was still Sir Horace's, and that she had made assignations with the Baronet, both at Seaview and at home.

During this time Lilith never left the grounds, for fear of meeting Sir Horace, or, worse still, Stephen Brooks; and all the while she was in a state of cruel uncertainty, tormented with doubts as to whether she was acting wisely in keeping secret her knowledge of what had happened on the night Colin was shot.

After much thought she came to the conclusion to wait until her father came back to England, so as to lay the whole facts of the case before him, and be guided by his decision in the matter.

How long she would have to wait she did not know, for she had not heard from Lord Ansthorpe since the letter announcing his probable return; and, as a matter of fact, he might arrive at any moment; for, supposing the leave he applied for was granted, it had been his intention to start without delay.

In the meantime, a surprise befel her, inasmuch as Lady Lester wrote in high glee to announce her daughter's engagement to Sir Horace Dalton and her own consequent elation.

Before Lilith recovered from her astonishment at this news, she received a letter from Marcella, written in an agony of miserable helplessness.

"Oh, Lilith!" said the letter, "unless you help me I don't know what I shall do. Mother and Sir Horace have arranged our engagement between them, and it seems as if my consent was a matter of no importance whatever. I summoned up all my courage, and told Sir Horace that I did not love him—nay, more, that I loved someone else; but he only smiled, and said I was very young, and there was plenty of time for me to grow to care for him.

"One good thing, he does not worry one with caresses, and his attentions seem to be paid to mamma rather than to me. Nevertheless, he must intend to marry me, or why should he give me a ring, and have our engagement made public? Poor Arthur Calvert! He will see it in the newspapers, and will think I have forgotten him—perhaps that I never cared for him; and unless I fret myself to death—which is not unlikely, for my cough has become very bad again, and I feel miserably ill—I shall be forced into a marriage which is absolutely repulsive to me. I know what you will say—that I ought to resist, and declare positively that I won't marry Sir Horace.

"But, oh, Lilith! I have not your strength of character. I am weak and easily persuaded, and I am horribly afraid of my mother! I simply dare not defy her authority, and I am as helpless as a mouse caught in a trap. Now and again I feel a desperate

impulse to do something, but it fades; and then I see that the only thing I can do is to submit. Will you not use your influence? Write to mother, and beg her to break it all off between Sir Horace and me, and I shall be grateful to you as long as I live!"

Here the letter abruptly ended, as if Marcella had been interrupted, and had hastily thrust it into an envelope and sent it off.

After reading it, Lilith laid it on her lap, and fell into a brown study; and the first impression of which she was conscious was the fact that, so far as she herself was concerned, Sir Horace's engagement did not affect her.

Long since she had become aware that her fancy for him had died when she discovered his treachery, but now she had the extra assurance that not even a lingering regret remained—her feelings had undergone so complete a change that instead of loving, she despised him too completely even to hate him.

All the same, it would be very difficult for her to interfere between him and her cousin, lest the cause of her interference should be misinterpreted; and, besides, she did not see what she could do, for she knew her aunt's character too well to imagine that Lady Lester would permit herself to be influenced in such a matter.

Still she could not allow Marcella's appeal to pass unnoticed, so she sent a letter to Lady Lester begging her not to force her daughter into a marriage against her inclinations, while to Marcella herself, she wrote, encouraging her to have the courage of her opinions, and not to give way to Sir Horace and her mother's intimidations.

Lyndhurst, of course, was unaware of this correspondence, for he and his wife never met now, and Lilith did not think it worth while informing him of her cousin's engagement. If he saw it announced in the papers, well and good; if not, it did not matter.

A day or two later, Lady Lester wrote again, taking no notice of Lilith's remonstrances, and simply stating that she and Marcella were going up to town for a week, in order to make certain arrangements for the wedding, which was to take place as speedily as possible.

"You will be glad to hear," she added, "that Marcella is much better; indeed, except for a slight cough, I may say she is quite well."

Lilith did not altogether believe this favourable report of her cousin's health, which somewhat clashed with Marcella's own account; but she was entirely unprepared for a telegram which arrived the next evening, and which was couched in these words,—

"Marcella is dying, and wishes to see you. Come at once. I will send to meet you at Paddington."

Lilith's character certainly did not err on the side of indecision, and she immediately made up her mind to start by the first train for London. She procured a Bradshaw and managed to discover from its intricacies that the mail left W— at eight o'clock. It was nearly half-past seven now, but if she was quick, and ordered the dog cart at once she would be able to get to W— in less than half-an-hour, and thus catch the train.

She rang the bell and gave her orders, then went into her dressing-room and attired herself—for, by an unlucky chance, her maid had gone home ill two days before, and she had written to Lady Lester—who was an amateur registry office—to get her another. It was awkward certainly, as it would necessitate her travelling up to London alone; but still it could not be helped, and it did not strike her to take one of the other servants as an escort. On her way downstairs she met Streeter, and stopped him to give him a message.

"Give this telegram to your master, and tell him I am going to see Miss Lester. I will send word to-morrow when I shall be back again."

The valet bowed, and looked at her curiously. He, in common with the rest of the servants, knew there was again something wrong be-

tween Mr. Lyndhurst and Lady Lilith, and many were the sneers and comments uttered in the servants' hall with regard to the relations existing between husband and wife.

Lilith did not notice the glance—it was not likely she would, for she was too preoccupied to think of anything save poor Marcella's condition, and she could hardly curb her impatience until she found herself at W—, seated in the corner of a first-class carriage, which the guard—rendered amiable by a generous tip—promised should not be invaded by any other passengers.

He kept his word, and she travelled to London alone. The train was an express, and only stopped twice before it reached Paddington; nevertheless, the journey seemed to be very long, and in addition to her anxiety on Marcella's account, she was attacked by a strange sense of loneliness—of desolation. Perhaps it was because she had never before travelled without a companion, or perhaps because she was the victim of an odd premonition of coming evil, which she was powerless to banish.

Arrived at Paddington, the first person she saw was Sir Horace Dalton, who came forward, raising his hat, and holding out his hand.

Lilith was considerably startled at first, but a moment's reflection was sufficient to show her that the Baronet's appearance was natural enough, considering the position he occupied with regard to Marcella, and his quiet manner and matter-of-fact words strengthened this impression.

She did not take any notice of his proffered hand, and he said, quietly,—

"Lady Lester could not come and meet you herself, so she asked me to do so. Are you alone?"

"Yes," coldly, "my maid was away, so I could not bring her, and Mr. Lyndhurst is still too ill to leave the house. How is Marcella?"

"About the same—neither better, nor worse. She is constantly calling out for you, and the doctor says if anything can revive her it will be your presence. The brougham is waiting for you, just outside."

Lilith hurried out of the station, pretending not to see his offered arm. Sir Horace bit his lip at the slight, and then smiled to himself.

"You shall pay me for this, my lady, some day!" he murmured, with a queer mixture of vindictiveness and triumph in his face, and then he opened the door of the brougham for her to get in, saying as he did so, "Doubtless you will prefer being alone, so I will get up to the box."

She made no sign either of acquiescence or negation, and he sprang up beside the coachman, who touched the horse with his whip, and drove away rather quickly.

Preoccupied as she was with the thoughts of her cousin, Lilith did not notice in what direction they were going, until, awakening suddenly from her reverie, she looked out of the carriage window, and found herself in a locality which she did not at all recognise. Then it struck her that the distance from Paddington to Grosvenor-square was not very great, and that she had been in the brougham quite long enough to have arrived there. She pulled the check-string sharply, and the carriage drew up.

"What is it?" asked Sir Horace, appearing at the window.

"I do not know where I am," she responded.

"This is not the way to Grosvenor-square?"

"Grosvenor-square!" he repeated, in surprise, "But your aunt is not there. Did you not know that she and Marcella were staying at my place at Highgate? I thought Lady Lester had told you?"

"She told me nothing of the sort," Lilith said, quickly, and rather angrily. Then, fancying she might be accused of being unreasonable, she added, "Are we on our way there now?"

"Yes. It is some little distance yet. I ought to have told you when we started, but I was quite under the impression that you

knew. How was it your aunt did not mention it, I wonder?"

Lilith could not answer this query, and the Baronet resumed his old seat on the box, leaving the young girl anxious and annoyed. If the occasion had not been one of life and death she would certainly have turned back, for the last thing she desired was to find herself under the roof of Sir Horace Dalton; but, as matters were, there seemed no help for it, and she could not let poor Marcella pay the penalty for her mother's imprudence.

Lady Lester's reason for going to the house of her future son-in-law Lilith had no difficulty in guessing. She wanted to entangle Marcella's name with that of the Baronet, so that the former would not be able to get free from the engagement, whatever efforts she might make to do so, and she had purposely abstained from mentioning the fact in her letters, because she knew her conduct would excite Lilith's indignation.

Highbury is a long way from Paddington. Kentish-town-road, with its busy traffic of omnibuses and tramway, had to be traversed, and then the hill had to be slowly mounted, but at last the carriage turned in at a gate and was driven up a long, dark avenue, at the end of which—some distance from the road—was visible the outline of a large, low house, very sparsely lighted up.

Sir Horace helped Lilith to alight, and as he led her into the hall, said—

"Shall I send a servant with you to show you your rooms, or will you go to your cousin at once?"

Lilith promptly chose the latter alternative, and Sir Horace preceded her upstairs. As she followed him, she was struck by the singular quiet that reigned over the house. There was not a servant visible, and not a sound to be heard save the distant barking of a dog alarmed by the noise of the carriage wheels; still, under the circumstances, this was perhaps not unnatural, for as Marcella was so ill, absolute quiet was no doubt an essential.

At the end of a long corridor, Sir Horace threw open a door, and stood aside to let her pass through.

"Marcella is in the further room," he said, lowering his voice to a whisper; and Lilith, suspecting nothing, passed through the first apartment, which was a sort of small study, lined with books, into the next chamber opening from it.

On the threshold she paused, for the room was empty. Moreover, it was a sitting-room, and bore no traces of recent occupation. A fire burned in the grate, a lamp, already lighted, swung from the ceiling, and the air was heavy with the scent of hyacinths, several of which flowers were blossoming in a stand near the window.

Lady Lilith turned round sharply, and faced Sir Horace, who had followed her in, and who now, having closed the door, stood close beside her.

"Where is Marcella—where is my aunt?" she queried, a trenchant thrill of anxiety in her voice.

"They are in Grosvenor-square to the best of my belief," he returned, placidly.

"Then why have you brought me here?"

"Because I wished to convince you, that however unfaithful you may have been to your early love, I am still true to it."

"But Marcella—" Lilith could say no more. A suspicion of an awful possibility occurred to her, and it froze the words on her lips.

"Marcella is no better and no worse than she has been for the past few weeks. She is a poor, sickly thing, and I should think it very probable that she will go into a consumption and die in the course of six months or so, but I cannot say that I am particularly interested in her—especially at the present moment when you are before me."

"Not interested in her—the girl whom you are going to marry!"

"The girl upon whom I never wish to set eyes again," he amended, coolly. "My en-

agement with her was a farce from beginning to end—a stratagem which has succeeded in its object; and that object, I need hardly tell you, was the hope of winning you!"

## CHAPTER XXV.

EVEN yet, the whole horror of her position did not occur to Lilith; indeed, Sir Horace's villainy was so audacious, the measures he had taken were so bold, that at first it seemed to the girl as if she were assisting at some scene of a drama rather than in an actual personal experience.

She was bewildered with the rapidity of her own sensations, and brave as she was, there was something in the triumphant, half-malicious smile with which Sir Horace regarded her that frightened her.

"Let me go away!" she exclaimed, but her voice was faint with sickening fear. "I do not know why you have brought me here if it is not true that Marcella is dying!"

"I will explain to you—but will you not sit down? You must be tired with your journey and the excitement of suspense."

He pushed an armchair forward, but she took no notice of it, and remained standing opposite to him still clothed in her bonnet and velvets and furs in which she had travelled. Her cheeks were white, her eyes dilated, and her small gloved hands were clasped tightly together in a frenzy of impatience.

"I have been forced to deceive you, because there was no other way of gaining an opportunity for seeing you," went on Sir Horace. "You did not come to the theatricals at Westland Chase, you would not meet me outside the Heathcliffe grounds, so when I found I could not get what I wanted by fair means I had to try foul ones. In judging me, please recollect that it is you who are, in reality, answerable for my sin—if sin you choose to call it!"

"I have no desire to argue with you on the point—which is one of no interest to me," Lilith said, controlling her voice with an effort. "I wish to know whether the telegram I received, purporting to be from my aunt, was really sent by her."

"I am afraid I must confess it was not."

"You mean you forged it?"

He shrugged his shoulders, deprecatingly.

"You are calling a spade a spade with a vengeance! However, the fact remains the same, that for the purpose of inducing you to come to London I made use of Lady Lester's name."

There was a moment's pause. Lilith was telling herself that, above all things, she must keep her self-possession, and not let herself be daunted by this emergency; but she could hardly decide what was the best attitude for her to adopt. Tears and entreaties would, she felt, be useless, and she feared that threats would be equally impotent with the Baronet. The one great thing was to put on a bold front, and in that way gain time for a decision.

"May I ask what specific object you had in bringing me here against my will?"

"It was not against your will," he answered, with a quick smile. "I used no force in bringing you, please recollect, and you need not fear that you will not meet with the fullest and deepest respect, while you honour my roof with your presence. But we will drop these preliminaries," he added, with a rapid change of tone; and he came forward a step, and put his hands on her shoulders so as to look down into her eyes. It was useless for her to try and escape his grasp, for he held her firmly, and all she could do was to submit. "As I told you before, I tell you again—I love you, Lilith, and each day that passes only intensifies my love!"

"And as I told you before, I have no feeling save scorn and contempt towards you!" she cried, in her clear, high-pitched voice, which thrilled with the indignation she could not suppress. "My love died with the discovery of your real character—in effect, I doubt

whether it was love at all, or only a girl's fancy for the first handsome man who paid her attention!"

"If that is so—but I do not believe you—I must wake it into life again. I have made up my mind to win you, and I will keep my resolution, at whatever cost to you or myself!"

"Never!" she cried out. Then she looked him in the eyes with bitterest scorn. "You dare to speak to me of love—you, who would have let me die on the cliff rather than run an infinitesimal risk in trying to save me! You must be mad to think it possible that I can ever regard you with anything but aversion!"

He winced at her words as if a naked sword had flashed across his vision. He was ashamed of his behaviour on the cliff—more ashamed because Lyndhurst had done so readily and so easily what he feared to attempt. But it was unlucky for Lilith that she recalled the episode just then, for it only served to harden him. His eyes darkened ominously, and his grasp on her shoulder grew firmer.

"Wait a minute, if you please, Lady Lilith, before you state your aversion so defiantly. Presently, when you see things a little clearer, you will recognize the policy of trying to conciliate me—"

"We will not discuss that," she interrupted him, without ceremony. "You have brought me here under false pretences, and I insist on leaving this house at once. Do you hear, Sir Horace? I insist."

He laughed insolently.

"I am afraid your insistence will be of no avail, for now that I have got you I have not the slightest intention of letting you go."

"But you will not keep me against my will—you dare not!"

"Dare not? You will see. There are very few things I dare not do, Lady Lilith, when my blood is up, and a moment's reflection will convince you that I have gone too far to go back. I shall keep you here over to-morrow, whether you consent or not."

In a moment she had sprung to the window, and attempted to open it, but the sashes were nailed to the frame and would not move. Nothing daunted, she dashed her hand through a pane of glass, but the fragments fell inside, for the outer shutters, which worked with a spring, had been closed, and the only result of her effort was a cut hand.

"Useless, Lady Lilith! Precautions have been taken, and if you screamed from now till to-morrow morning there would be no chance of your being heard. The only person in the house is a caretaker and my valet. The first is as deaf as a post, and the latter so devoted to my interests that he would prove even the deafer of the two."

Lilith turned upon him with a splendid imperiousness that almost awed him.

"Do you think this villainy of yours will pass unpunished? Do you think that in this free England of ours, a woman can be abducted as I have been without the perpetrator of the crime being visited with condign punishment? I—an Earl's daughter, and the wife of one of the most influential commoners in England—to be imprisoned and kept from my friends! You must be mad, Sir Horace Dalton, or such an idiotic, though most villainous plot would never have entered your head. The moment I am free I will go to the nearest magistrate and have a summons taken out for your arrest; and trust me, if there is justice in England, you shall not escape the full penalty of the law!"

He was a little taken aback by this defiant attitude. In his overwhelming vanity he had fancied that a few sweet words would have been sufficient to win back her love, and it was a pet theory of his that women are attracted by a man who risks much in order to gain them. He had risked a great deal—he knew it, but he had laid his plans with such consummate art that he decided he could defy that very importunate and awkward minister of justice, called the law.



"There is no doubt that if you could prove what I have done you could get me punished," he returned, nonchalantly; "but, on consideration, I don't think you will do it, for the harm to yourself would be at least as great as the harm to me. In the first place, how could you show that you had not come here willingly?"

"I could get a copy of the telegram you sent me."

"And suppose I said we had arranged it beforehand—you and I—on purpose to hoodwink your husband—what then?"

"No one would believe you."

"Would they not? Ah, Lillith, you are very young, and you do not know the world. Society is always willing to believe a scandal concerning a pretty woman; and the younger she is, and the prettier she is, the more harshly it will judge her. But why should we look at the matter in this light, my dearest? Let me, at least, tell you that I have acted throughout under the impression that you loved me, and that in taking you away from your husband I should be promoting your happiness. If I had thought otherwise I would never have embarked on this perilous enterprise. My idea was to get you here, and then take you away to France to an old aunt of mine, who is devoted to me, and who would most willingly take charge of you until you are free to become my wife. In the meanwhile, your husband would be able to procure a divorce, and as soon as that was made absolute, we would be married. Till then, you shall be to me as my sister—my dearest charge—the star of my life, and afterwards—ah! then, Lillith, we would indeed taste that divine elixir which alone makes existence worth existing for!"

His manner had changed to its old impassioned fervour—his voice was soft and entreating, his blue eyes were full of the passion that seemed to thrill his whole being, and which, in former days, would have struck a responsive chord in Lillith's heart. Now, however, she heard him with the most unmoved indifference; her colour did not deepen, her heart did not beat quicker—she was cold as Galatea before Pygmalion's love turned the chilly marble, into warm, pulsating humanity.

"You have been acting under a delusion," she said, "and now that you know it you will let me go."

He shook his head.

"Too late, Lillith! The downward path is easy, but there is no turning back—either for you, or for me. Your reputation is already compromised, and you may be quite sure that neither your husband, nor your aunt, Lady Lester, would believe your version of the story."

"But you will tell them it is true!" she cried, in a sudden agony of suffocation, as his words revealed to her the cruel position into which she had been betrayed. "You are surely not inhuman enough to shadow the whole life of a woman too weak to fight you on your own ground—a woman whom you profess to love!"

"Whom I do love with all my soul!" he returned, fervidly, and he seized her in his arms, crushing her slight form against his chest, while he kissed her eyes, her brow, her lips. "No one shall take you from me—no one! A woman cannot do without love. It is as necessary to her as the air she breathes, and I will never believe you have ceased to care for me unless you tell me another man has taken my place!"

With a supreme exercise of all her strength she had broken away from him, a scorching flood of shame crimsoning her cheeks under the degradation of his caress. The shame of it made her ready to call upon the earth to hide her; but, for the moment, her rage and agitation were too great to let her speak. In the interval, he repeated his words:—"I will never believe you have ceased to care for me until you tell me another man has taken my place in your heart," and as he spoke, a secret

which she had resolutely refused to admit to her own consciousness, took shape, and acting on the impulse of the moment she avowed it.

"If that assurance will satisfy you, you shall have it. I do love another man—and with a love before which my old fancy for you dwindles and fades away into utter insignificance. I love him so well that he fills my heart, and as long as I live no other can ever take his place. That man is my husband!"

If she had struck Sir Horace a blow the effect could not have been greater. He absolutely started back with surprise, and then he broke into a harsh laugh.

"Your husband!—the son of the working man, whose ancestors were hewers of stone and tillers of the soil? Impossible! Why, all the world knows you married him for his money, and he married you for your name!"

Lillith flushed under the taunt, but she did not reply to it. If Lyndhurst had proved himself worthy of his own name she would have been proud to take up his defence—proud to avow her trust and admiration for the man whose name she bore. But it was not so. Colin had been tempted, and instead of resisting, had yielded to the temptation, and nothing short of such a crisis as the present would ever have torn from Lillith the avowal of the love which had come to her by such insidious degrees that she had not noticed it in her bosom long before she even dreamed of its existence.

Not for the wealth of India would she ever let him know the truth, or even suspect it. He would laugh at her—despise her weakness, for he had not gone from her to Fatty Redmayne—a half-educated, frivolous little rustic, with nothing but her pink and white beauty, and a certain weak amiability to recommend her?

If she had striven her utmost she could have found no surer way of enraging Sir Horace than by this declaration. Already he hated Lyndhurst as a dishonourable and dissipated man will hate an honourable and pre-minded one; but it had been a hatred dashed with triumph, for he had formerly imagined that to him had been given the love of his rival's wife. To find himself mistaken—to hear her vow, her love for Colin—was the bitterest disillusion that had ever befallen him, and for an instant it seemed to him that he hated Lillith as much as he hated her husband. No chance of softening him now—no hope that an appeal to his pity would meet with any success! Husband and wife were both in his power, and he was determined to press that power to its utmost limit.

"You have given me a rival whom I cannot meet on equal grounds," he said, with a sneer, "and you have surprised me too. I could not have deemed it possible that your taste would run in such a bourgeois direction—your passion is as inexplicable as Desdemona's for the Moor, and it threatens to have an equally unfortunate termination. Mr. Lyndhurst will hardly care to welcome you back after believing you have eloped with me, and he will have no doubt that your elopement was premeditated. You see you did not even bring your maid with you!"

"My maid is ill, and I sent her home—a fact with which you were probably acquainted."

"Yes; Lady Lester used to let me read your letters, and I laid my plans accordingly. Believe me, Lillith, your only chance of setting yourself right with the world is to let Lyndhurst get his divorce and then marry me?"

"Marry you! Death itself would be preferable. Go away!" she cried, fiercely, as he approached nearer. "I am desperate, and if you come one step closer, I will dash this lamp to the ground,"—she laid her hand on the rose-shaded reading-lamp, which was standing on a small, low table near the fireplace—"and involve you and myself in the same fate!"

She meant what she said, and Sir Horace involuntarily fell back a pace. In her former struggle to get free from him her bonnet had fallen to the floor, and the long loose masses

of her golden hair had escaped from their fastenings, and lay in thick soft, waves over her shoulders.

No Cleopatra or Semiramis could ever have looked more regal than she did at that moment, and neither of those self-willed queens could have shown a more determined front to an enemy.

What would have been the issue of the contest cannot be said, for at that juncture an interruption came in the shape of a violent ringing of the front door bell, and Sir Horace's face changed, for a guilty conscience needs no accuser, and a fear that his villainy had been discovered fell upon him.

He hurriedly left the room, locking the door after him, and the moment he had gone, Lillith sank down on a couch, covering her face with her hands and trembling violently. The strain upon her had been very great, and she knew that it had only just begun, and she would need all her powers to thwart the Baronet in his nefarious designs.

Meanwhile, he had gone downstairs and opened the door himself; and there a surprise awaited him, for his late and most unwelcome visitor was none other than Lady Lester.

"Thank Heaven, I have found you!" she exclaimed, pushing her way into the hall, and throwing back her veil, as she sat down, with an air of fatigue. "I have been to your club, and to your chambers; and, as a last resource, I came here—hardly, however, with the expectation of seeing you."

"But why should you want to see me in such haste?" asked the Baronet, hurrying her into a small room on the left wing of the house, so that there should be less chance of her hearing Lillith's cries, supposing the girl made efforts to attract her attention. "What has happened?"

His heart beat rather rapidly as he asked the question, for he naturally supposed her visit had some connection with her niece. Her next words undeceived him, and he breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"An awful thing—Marcella has run away!"

"Is that all?" was on his lips, but he checked it in time, and assumed an expression of surprise and consternation. "Run away, Marcella!" he repeated. "Where has she gone to?"

"If I knew that I should not be here at the present moment. It was little more than an hour ago that I discovered she had gone, for she had locked herself in her room all the afternoon, and it was quite by chance I found she was not there."

"But what can I do in the matter?" asked Sir Horace, very much inclined to consign Marcella and her mother into outer darkness, but prudently resolved not to betray this mental attitude, which would have aroused Lady Lester's wrath, if not her suspicions. "How can I help you?"

"I will tell you; but, first of all, give me glass of wine—I am quite exhausted."

Sir Horace unwillingly left the room to comply with her request, and during his absence Lady Lester was startled by the sound of a woman's cry—a long, piercing shriek—which made its way through all the intervening doors and passages, and sounded strangely eerie in the empty house.

Sir Horace hastened in—a decanter in one hand, and a wine glass in the other, and, after carefully closing the door, proceeded to pour out the sherry. As he did so his hand trembled so violently that part of the wine was spilt.

"What was that noise?" queried his visitor, fixing his sharp eyes on his face.

"Nothing. An owl shrieking, I expect. There is a nest of them in one of the chimneys, and they do make a most infernal row sometimes."

"I never heard an owl utter a cry like that before!" said Lady Lester, drily; but she asked no more questions—partly because she was too anxious, on Marcella's account, to think of anything else, and partly because she had no desire to pry into Sir Horace's



[SHE MEANT WHAT SHE SAID, AND SIR HORACE INVOLUNTARILY FELL BACK A PACE.]

affairs until she possessed the quasi rights of a mother-in-law to consider them her own. She drank her wine, and then continued, "When I discovered Marcella's absence it was too late to telegraph, and too late to go to Heathcliff by train; and the only thing I could do was to make arrangements for tomorrow. Of course we must keep her flight secret, if possible, and it is quite possible, for only you and I need know anything at all about it. I have thought the matter well over, and the conclusion I have come to is, that she has gone to one of two places—either to Heathcliff Hall, or to Dover."

"To Dover!"

"Yes. The mother of that wretched drawing-master, Arthur Calvert, lives there, and it is quite possible she may have thrown herself on her protection, although the probabilities are rather in favour of her being with Lillith. Now, my idea is this. If you are quick, you will be able to catch the midnight train for Dover from Victoria, and first thing tomorrow morning I will go to Heathcliff, so that one of us is sure to find her. Do you understand?"

Sir Horace looked utterly dismayed. He had made every arrangement for taking Lillith over to France to the aunt of whom he had spoken; and now, while he was distracted with doubts and fears, he was to be sent off to Dover to bring back Marcella—whom he would willingly have left for ever, wherever she might chance to be!

"Well!" exclaimed Lady Lester, rather impatiently, "What do you think of my plan—can you devise a better one?"

"No," he returned, hesitatingly; "only I don't think there is any necessity for starting away to-night. If Marcella is with this Mrs. Calvert she is all right."

"How can you be so foolish?" cried Lady Lester, stamping her foot. "Of course these people are most anxious for Marcella to marry their son. They know she has some money;

and, besides, think of what an advantage Marcella's name would be to them! If she is really there, you may be quite sure the mother will do her utmost to bring about a marriage without delay, and it is more than likely that they will cross the Channel by the first boat in the morning—they may even leave Dover to-night. Here is Mrs. Calvert's address—I took the precaution of bringing it with me."

"But why should not you go to Dover, and let me go to Heathcliff in the morning?" asked Sir Horace, seeing no other way out of the difficulty.

"Because," continued his visitor, shortly, "neither Mr. Lyndhurst nor Lillith would permit you to bring Marcella away—supposing her to be there, and it is essential that she should not be encouraged in her disobedience. Me they could not refuse, for I should be armed with a mother's authority. No, I have been thinking it over during this horrible journey from Grosvenor place, and I am sure my plan cannot be improved upon. I came in a hansom, and it is waiting outside, so you can come back with me, and I will see you off at Victoria."

Sir Horace's dismay increased. Lady Lester was not the sort of woman to be defied with impunity; and the Baronet, although he would have cared nothing for her displeasure at any other time, felt it would be unwise to incur it just now. Once he thought of boldly declaring that Marcella's conduct released him from his engagement, but if he had done so, Lady Lester would have suspected that he had entered into it merely as a blind, for he had known from the first that Marcella was in love with the young artist, Arthur Calvert. Besides, if he had been released from his obligations as a lover, she would have appealed to him as a friend, and the situation would have been just the same.

At all risks he must get Lady Lester out of the house without delay, for there was always

the chance that Lillith might repeat her cry, and that her aunt would recognize her voice. The position was an unpleasant one, and materially complicated matters just now.

"I will go with you at once," he said, leading the way out-of-doors and helping her into the hansom.

Needless to say, he had not the remotest intention of starting to Dover, but he argued that if he went as far as Victoria Station he could take his ticket, and then give Lady Lester the slip and drive back to Highgate in a cab. It was a disagreeable alternative, but it was the only one that suggested itself as feasible.

(To be continued.)

DECORATIVE NOTES. — When mirrors are etched at borders, centres or at tops, the frames should not be gilded, but be preferably of steel, in dead hue, figured hardwood or velvet. Amongst the commonest deals used in the construction of ordinary houses, there is much room for choice for door-panels and dados. These should be picked out from the most nicely pencilled and marked grain. Careful staining to a good rich brown will reveal a delicate pattern more beautiful than common graining. All that is required is a good hard oak varnish on this stain. Yellow in designs should be used in small quantities or distributed among other colours; light bright yellows are seldom in place. Red is a difficult colour to use, and only pleasing when deep and full, whether inclining to yellow and called scarlet, or towards blue and called crimson. If the scarlet passes a certain degree of impurity it falls into a hot brown-red; if the crimson be much reduced it tends towards a cold colour, known as magenta, either of which in masses is disagreeable. The finest red is a central one, a very powerful colour, scarcely to be got by a flat tint of colours.





["YOU YOUNG DOG!" EXCLAIMED THE ADMIRAL; "YOU PROMISED TO STAY WHERE I LEFT YOU TILL I CAME BACK!"]

NOVELLETTE.]

## ELINOR'S GOLDEN DREAM.

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### CHAPTER VI.

AN INDEPENDENT YOUNG LADY.

"CAUGHT in a trap," laughed the old man, delighted at his victory.

"Hermione, my dear, this is that rascal of a nephew of mine, and he's given me more trouble than all the rest of the family put together. He doesn't look a 'paragon,' does he, lass? Notice the cut of his jib! He's all there! and I'm not ashamed to say it, because he's my nephew."

"I did not know that 'paragons' were all made in the same mould, Admiral! I evidently must come to you for instruction upon the subject, as I have not given it much consideration," replied Hermione, and she bowed slightly to her new acquaintance as she spoke.

Admiral Longmore chuckled as he got hold of his nephew's hand, and wrung it cordially. "And this is Miss Challoner, my boy. You have heard me speak of her, I think," and his grey eyes twinkled like wicked twin stars.

"I don't think I heard you speak of anything else, uncle, the last time we met."

He laughed, raising his hat, and letting his gaze rest upon the handsome girl before him.

"And therefore Miss Challoner must pardon me if I carried an image of her in my mind's eye upon my last cruise," he said, with utmost courtesy.

"But it did not come up to the original," chuckled the old man.

"You're right, it did not," returned his nephew, in a low voice, "and I am more than prepared to have the opportunity of making Miss Challoner's acquaintance." Then turning to her, he added,—

"As my uncle's nephew, I hope are long to

claim your friendship, for you are a wonderful favourite of his, believe me."

"The Admiral is a capital neighbour," she answered, somewhat evasively, "and he and my father would be dull without each other's society."

"I should think we should, lass, or yours either."

"You can do without that now, since you have your nephew," she replied, stiffly.

"And now I really must run home."

"Very well, my dear. I'll anchor here on this seat and rest. Douglas, you'll see Miss Challoner to her house."

Hermione protested, with crimson cheeks, but the sailor took his place by her side.

"I'll pick you up on my way back, uncle," he said, and the thing was settled.

"All right, my boy; don't hurry yourself," returned the Admiral, "I like a nap in the open air before dinner—it will give me an appetite."

"It will give you a cold, you mean," said Hermione. "I can't think how you can be so foolish. Let Captain FitzMaurice go in with you, you must have plenty to talk about."

"Not a bit of it," laughed the younger man, leading the way, and Hermione followed him, because there seemed nothing else left for her to do—feeling thoroughly antagonistic; although she was bound to confess the Admiral's nephew was not at all the sort of 'good young man' she had expected to see, and was absolutely the handsomest fellow she had ever met in her life. She was quite angry with herself because she couldn't think him ugly, disagreeable, or a pedant.

They walked on in silence until they were outside the gate of Bellerophon House; then he looked down at her with a smile, which made her heart quiver as it had never done before, and at the same time made her angry that she should thus feel the influence of his hardy beauty and the charm of manner so peculiar to himself.

"So you have made up your mind to dislike me, Miss Challoner?" he said, his blue eyes dancing. "You must pardon me that I was so unfortunate as to overhear your words, but I think it is only honest to tell you I did so, and that I might do it, you see I have thrust myself upon your society, feeling how unwelcome I am."

"Could you like any one whose perfections have been preached at you for the past two years?" asked Hermione, quaintly.

"Well, to tell the truth, I used to think I could," he answered, in a low voice. "I used to believe that if a girl could satisfy such a requiring old termagant as my uncle there must be really something in her; and so I have thought of you for a very long time, and have frequently pictured our meeting. But such fancies are often dispelled by the first touch of reality, and here is a case in point. Sailors are apt to be romantic, left as they are for days and weeks in a world of waters with no woman's face, except what memory or fancy provides; and in my next voyage I shall probably be more prosaic and wise, and not indulge in foolish fancies."

She looked up at him, but he was speaking quite gravely, and there was a shade of disappointment in his tone.

"Yes! I have often heard that sailors are romantic," she said, with a smile.

"But they are not so foolish as to believe in any one," he continued. "Take my uncle for an example. He never saw a girl he would care to make his wife. Women are pretty toys; it does not do to entrust one's happiness to their keeping, and I shall die a bachelor, like my poor old uncle here."

"What a merciful escape for the women!" laughed Hermione, "I'd sooner be hanged than have anything to do with a man with such views. I'm glad you're not my brother."

"I'm glad I am not."

"And I am still more rejoiced that my father is coming, and I can relieve you of the

trouble of seeing me home. Your object is carried out; you have informed me what you heard," she said, with glowing cheeks and angry eyes, "and, I must confess, I see no reason for altering the opinion I had formed. Papa, this is Admiral Longmore's nephew, Captain Fitzmaurice, who our stupid old friend was so foolish as to insist on sending home with me, as though I had not been backwards and forwards thousands of times, and am not old enough to take care of myself," she added, irritably.

"I fear you have not shown much gratitude to your escort," said Colonel Challenger, warmly shaking the young man's hand. "My daughter is of an independent nature, but I am very glad to see Admiral Longmore's nephew. You are most welcome for his sake now, and from all I have heard of you will, doubtless, be quickly valued for your own, and I hope you will make yourself as much at home at Rippleworth as he does."

"Thank you; that is a hearty invitation, and I shall hope to avail myself of your hospitality," he replied, looking at Hermione for some sign of approval on her part.

But a cloud rested upon the proud, handsome face, and the dark eyes were downcast.

"Perhaps you are like myself, and prefer to begin with a fixed date. Suppose you fetch your uncle, and take us just as you find us at dinner-time?"

"Papa, surely you forget that Maud is here, and she and Herbert—" and Hermione stopped and hesitated.

"Would take themselves off to talk sweet-nothings. Fitzmaurice, my son has engaged himself this afternoon, and his fiancée is with us; but if you don't object to lovers—"

"Miss Challoner is right," returned the sailor; "a stranger would be *de trop*. I should be sorry to spoil the family harmony."

"Well, then, to-morrow night," said the Colonel, cheerily.

"But, father, Elinor Hardcastle and Mr. Thornhill are coming then," objected Hermione.

"There seems to be a spell against your visit, captain," laughed the Colonel, gaily; "but I'm not to be baffled. Hermione has faced me with another pair of lovers whose happiness and peace must not be disturbed; but we shall have no one to lunch to-morrow, and no one to dine the day after, so book those two engagements, and tell my old friend that he is expected."

"I shall be pleased to come if Miss Challoner has no other views," said Captain Fitzmaurice, regarding her gravely.

"None whatever, thanks," she answered, not deigning to look at him, and turned away to gather some roses as she spoke.

"May I help you, Miss Challoner?" he asked.

"Thank you, but it is a pleasure," she returned.

"Then I will stand aside; I should be sorry to deprive you of it," he answered, ceremoniously, and continued talking with her father; but he noted that she dropped a rosebud as she went, and left it unheeded upon the path, and as he quitted the gardens he raised it, and placed it in his button-hole, having first pressed it to his lips.

"Hermione," said Colonel Challenger, a little vexedly, "I never knew you less civil to anyone, and for the Admiral's sake alone you might be pleasant to his nephew."

"It is not my way, father, to be pleasant to people I don't care about, and I can't see why one is bound to make a fuss with any one because he happens to be of the same family as someone else," replied the girl, petulantly.

The Colonel looked at her in astonishment.

"My dear, I have always lauded your strong common sense up to this moment; now you are not in the least like yourself. One would think there was something objectionable in Captain Fitzmaurice, whereas he is a brave man and a distinguished officer."

"Oh! spare me any more of his perfections!" cried Hermione, excitedly. "Have I not heard of them till I am weary? If you could tell me he had done something wicked it would be quite refreshing."

"Hermione!"

"Well, let us change the subject, papa. We shall not agree upon it. Now, what did Sir Randall say?"

"Oh! of course he made difficulties; fathers always do. I should, if anyone asked for you, no doubt," laughed the Colonel.

"Nobody ever will, so you need not trouble yourself, papa; and if they were to do so, I should have to be consulted, and I should certainly say 'No.' I hate men!"

"Dear me! that is something new," returned her father. "I thought their stronger natures suited your taste; but one lives and learns. I do believe you have been quarrelling with the Admiral."

"If you choose to take up absurd fancies, I cannot help it, papa," she cried, with her eyes bright, and her cheeks flushed.

"Hallo! you're going to scold me now, are you, my dear? Hermione, what is the matter with you? You are quite unlike yourself to-day."

She stood silent a moment—her temper struggling with her generous nature. Then she conquered.

"I am in the wrong, father," she said, softly, and linked her hand within his arm.

"No, I am not myself, my dear old dad, and yet I cannot tell you what ails me."

"Perhaps the thought of losing Herbert has upset you," suggested the Colonel. "You will miss him, Hermione; he has been an affectionate brother."

"He has, and I shall; but it is not that. I am only too glad that he should be happy."

"Then what is it, my dear girl?" he inquired, anxiously.

But Hermione could not tell him. She scarcely knew herself that she had treasured the noble picture of manhood in her heart which her friend the Admiral had drawn for her, and made it her ideal; and the thought that she had found her master was far from acceptable to her proud spirit; and she was absolutely impatient with herself, for the thrill of hitherto unknown pleasure which those powerful blue eyes had caused in her heart; and determined to show him, and herself, how little she was to him after all.

## CHAPTER VII.

"I WOULD DO MUCH MORE FOR YOUR SAKE IF YOU WOULD ONLY BELIEVE IT!"

HERBERT and Maud were made very happy that evening by Colonel Challenger, who repeated the conversation he had held with Sir Randall St. George, in his own amusing way taking off the clerical peculiarities of his friend with good humour; and the two young people wandered hand-in-hand in the garden till the darkness deepened, and it was time for Maud to return to the Rectory.

"It won't be for long, Maudie!" said the young man, softly, as he lingered at the gate. "I shall get a little home as soon as possible for my pet, and carry her away from chattering Rylands, and have her all to myself, and then I shall be happy."

"And so shall I, Bertie!" she whispered, with her arms about his neck, and the impatient stars twinkling merrily overhead.

"I don't mind how small it is, so long as there is room for us both in it—that is all I want, is it not?"

"And this afternoon my foolish old girl told me it was to be our last together!" he laughed, happily.

"You see I didn't think you wanted papa to know; and how could I tell Colonel Challenger would be so kind?" she answered, in a low, contented voice.

"Did you imagine I would risk losing you, darling?" he asked.

"I am glad you didn't!" she replied. "But, Bertie, you could not have lost me. I could never have loved anyone else—only waiting would have been very weary work."

"Very, little one—we won't do it. I shall come to-morrow morning, and try to settle an early date for our marriage; and now, I suppose, I must let you go in;" but, although he said so, he still held her in a warm embrace, and might have continued to do so, but that circumstances, in the person of the Rector, decided the matter for him.

His portly figure appeared in the doorway, with his wife beside him, in full relief against the lighted gas in the hall.

"It's quite time Maud was home, my dear," he said, argumentatively; "and I shall go over to Rippleworth and fetch her."

"I wouldn't hurry her to-night, Randall," said Lady St. George, but the Rector had already started off down the path, and met the lovers entering the gate, without a remembrance of the days of his own courtship, or a suspicion of the time they had spent there so happily, hand clasped in hand, heart beating against heart, lip pressed to lip.

"Just in time to save me a walk!" he said, stopping.

"Good evening, Challenger, I couldn't make you hear this afternoon. I hope you had a pleasant pull. I have seen your father since then, and I shall be at home at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. Come in, Maud, my dear; you're very late, and your mother is waiting for you at the door. Good-night, Challenger!"

"Good-night, Sir Randall. I will be with you at eleven!"

Then he held his sweetheart's hand in a lingering farewell, whispered a last fond word, and went out at the Rectory gate, and Maud was locked in her mother's arms.

"Mumsey, dear, I am happy!" she said, contently.

"And so am I in your joy, my dear child!" she answered, kindly. "I have long thought you two cared for each other, and I am glad it is settled. Herbert will make you an affectionate husband!"

"He will, indeed, mother. You can't think how he loves me!"

"Perhaps I can, dear. Remember I was young once, and had a lover too."

Maud looked up in surprise.

"Did the pater ever really make love, mother?" she asked, with a look of bewilderment. "He is so utterly-matter-of-fact now that it is hard to believe it."

"If he had not done so I should not be here now, child!" laughed Lady St. George.

"Gracious! I hope Herbert won't be so prosaic in twenty, or even thirty years time!" said the girl, in comic diemay. "I should be miserable if he ceased to make love to me!"

"You will probably grow prosaic too, Maud, and when the love is all made, you will be content to enjoy it without further weaving. I don't think your father would care to be without me, Maudie!"

"How strange it must be to grow old, mother!" said the girl, thoughtfully; "and to have all one's warm, bright feelings toned down into neutral tints. I don't think I should like it!"

"You see, dear, it comes by degrees; and I must confess I am still very happy, although not so elastic in health, or exuberant in feelings as I was in youth; and I hope you will feel the same when you come to my age."

"So here you are at last!" cried Alice, giving her sister a hug; "and I have to congratulate you! Didn't I tell you at lunch to-day how it would be? Well, old girl, I'm really very glad; and now tell me. Have you seen the sailor? I hear he has come to Rylands after all!"

"What sailor?" asked Maud.

"Why, the Admiral's nephew, of course. Who else could I mean? You're sure to have heard all about him at Rippleworth, for the old man is always running after Hermione, and now I suppose Captain Fitzmaurice will do the same."



"I don't think it will be of much use if he sees; she does not seem to like him at all."  
 "Why not? Is he not good-looking?"  
 "The Colonel says he is simply splendid; but Hermione didn't take to him, as anyone can see."  
 "All the better," laughed Alice, and ran off, singing merrily.

Everything was satisfactorily settled the following morning between Sir Randall and Herbert Challoner, and the marriage of the young people was arranged to take place at an early date; a fact which he went back to Rippleworth to impart to his father with a light heart; and the Colonel looked up at him brightly, waving a letter in his hand.

"I have thrown out a line already, my dear boy, and hope to hook you a good appointment. My old friend, Lord Hayland, will assist me if he can; I know, and I think he will be able to do so. He's in London now, and I'll run up to see him when he has a day to spare to receive me."

"I'm glad you have written to him, father. He was always very kind to me, and having married your cousin will count in our favour."

"I think it will. And now I'll put this into the letter-box, and get ready to receive our visitors."

"Do you really like Captain FitzMaurice?"  
 "Decidedly; he's a man to be admired in all ways! You'll say so yourself when you see him."

"And yet Hermione's judgment is usually unerring, and it is certain he has not made a favourable impression on her. I never knew her so reserved about anyone before."

"No. I can't make Hermione out. I think something must have annoyed her yesterday of which we know nothing."

"Can't say. She was kindness itself to me and Maud. I'm not in it, if anyone has ruffled her feathers."

"Nor I. But something has gone wrong with her, I'm sure."

"Never mind; she'll soon get over it, dad. She's too sensible to sulk, whatever may have vexed her; and here they come up the drive!" and Herbert stood behind the curtains, looking out.

"By Jove! He's the handsomest fellow I ever saw! What a figure and springy walk! Hermy cannot object to his personal appearance, at any rate, and he seems a jolly sort of fellow. See how good-humouredly he is laughing, and helping the old Admiral along?"

"Yes! I told you he was charming, Bertie; the old man may well be proud of his heir!"

"He'll have a good deal more than the Admiral can leave him. He's an only child, and his father is as rich as a Jew. Why, that poor old woman left him an immense fortune, and that wretched old Arbour Glen is a part of it. A queer fancy of Mr. Hardcastle's, wasn't it, to take the old place?"

"Don't forget that his daughter dines with us to-night."

"I won't. But I'm off to meet this brace of sailors. Won't you all talk shop! I shall be out of it," and with a backward glance he left the room, and went to meet and welcome his father's guests at the hall door, leading them into the Admiral's favourite apartments, the drawing-room, where the Colonel quickly joined them.

Captain FitzMaurice had been told whose dainty fingers had arranged this tasteful bower, and his eyes wandered approvingly from one detail to another in the breaks of the conversation, until they fixed themselves upon the door, by which the proud beauty must enter, his heart beating heavily with the anticipated pleasure of meeting her again; even while he asked himself why he should be pleased, seeing that she had treated him with scant civility; and yet, with strange perversity, he had taken a greater fancy to her than he had ever done to any girl before.

The very fact of her wilfulness added piquancy to her beauty, and the difficulty in

winning her increased his desire to make the prize his own. From his uncle he knew that she was good, and brave, honest and true, and gentle too in her softer moods; and the thought came to him how sweet a task it would be to make her love him, to see her wilfulness give way, and the shy glance of affection growing in those dark eyes, which could look so haughty and so cold, but which he felt could become most dangerously soft.

But she did not enter the room until the gong had announced luncheon, when she came hastily in with a flush upon her cheeks, and a strange brightness in her eyes, dressed in cream colour, with a bunch of crimson roses at her shoulder, and another at her waist; and her glance at once settled upon the bud of the same colour in the buttonhole of Captain FitzMaurice's coat.

"Do you wonder where I got my flower?" he asked, as he led her into luncheon at her father's request, he having taken possession of the Admiral's arm.

"Yes; I saw it was one of ours!" she answered, readily. "It is an uncommon rose, and only just in bloom. I gathered the first blossoms yesterday!"

"And dropped this bud. Was it very dishonest of me to take possession of it?" and his blue eyes settled upon hers with so searching and earnest a look of inquiry that Hermione's cheeks were all aglow with colour; and she answered him never a word, as she walked by his side to the table, where he placed a chair for her.

"What do you say to a game of tennis after lunch, and I'll fetch Maud?" said Herbert, cheerily. "Of course the Captain plays, and we shall make a good set."

"Not to-day, Bertie. I am going to ride over to Grantham Court this afternoon," said Hermione, decidedly; "and I shall start immediately after luncheon."

For a moment a cloud of disappointment crossed the sailor's brow—the next it was chased away by one of amusement; and, as Hermione was riding home from the Court, who should meet her but Captain Douglas FitzMaurice.

"This is luck!" he said, gallantly, as he turned and went her way. "I hope, Miss Challoner, you did not go out this afternoon to escape my company?"

"What if I did?" she asked, defiantly.

"I should be so sorry for your disappointment!" he answered, gravely; "for I am so selfish that I cannot offer to give up the pleasure of your society!"

"Why do you insist on joining me?" she questioned, with a gleam of anger from the dark eyes.

"Because I want to know you better!" he answered, earnestly; "and because I am anxious to overcome the dislike you have somewhat unjustly taken to me! No man should be condemned without a hearing. Do not always avoid me, Miss Challoner, and we may yet be friends—who knows? In justice you must give me a trial!"

"Must I?" she asked, a gentler look gathering about her mouth. "Well, whatever comes of it, you will have only yourself to blame, Captain FitzMaurice. Instinct, I suppose, tells me to avoid you, and I have tried to do it!"

"And something—we will call it instinct if you like—tells me to seek you, and has told me so, even before I ever looked upon your sweet, proud face, Hermione; and I mean to continue to do so with or without your leave!" he said, with a strange mingling of earnestness and mischief.

Hermione brought her whip down smartly upon her horse's shoulder, and it flew forward like an arrow from the bow.

"How slowly we are riding," she said, totally disregarding his words, with a flush of indignation oddly blended with a keen joy, that this man, whose over-mastering influence she could not quell, was bent on wooing her, even against her will.

"Don't let us go so fast, Miss Challoner!"

he laughed, trying to keep by her side with his far less fleet steed.

"Why? You're not going to tumble off, are you?" she asked, wickedly.

"I'll promise not to do that," he replied, "even though I am a sailor. But if we go at this pace we shall be home before we can say Jack Robinson."

"All the better."

"I don't think so. Turn round, and I'll go as fast as this fat old animal of my uncle's can manage it."

"No, thanks; I have visitors coming. I must go back."

"Ah! I remember—a pair of happy lovers."

"I never said they were happy. They have not much to make them so but their affection for each other."

"If that is real, what more could they want?" he asked, in a low voice.

"A good deal—if the man were a sailor," she replied, mischievously. "But, fortunately for Miss Hardcastle's peace of mind, her lover is not. By-the-by, he is in your father's bank; and, more strange still, Mr. Hardcastle has taken an odd old house here, which is Mr. FitzMaurice's property; but how the unfortunate people are to live in it, in its present tumble-down condition, I'm sure I don't know. It is rather hard on my little friend Elinor to have to go there."

"Is she a friend of yours?" he inquired, with interest.

"Yes. I have taken a strong liking for her. She is so unselfish and gentle and meek under real troubles, and yet there's a vein of power and strength in the girl's character which one feels would lead her through heavy temptations. Yes, Elinor and I are friends!"

"She is fortunate, Miss Challoner, in having gained so warm a champion. Would it be troubling you to ride round by this house of my father's, that I may report upon its condition?"

"Will you ask him to set it in order? That would be kind to Elinor. All the people in Rylands are chattering at Mr. Hardcastle's taking his daughter to such a place," she said, with interest.

"I will, certainly," he answered, kindly. "And if I ask him, I think I can promise that he will not refuse."

She gave him a soft glance of gratitude for Elinor's sake.

"That is good of you!" she said, gently, and he determined that Arbour Glen should be thoroughly put in order for Hermione's friend.

And the directions which soon reached Mr. Letsom upon the subject very considerably astonished him, and all the inhabitants of Rylands, and none more so than Elinor herself and her selfish father.

But Hermione saw what was going on with a flush of joy, and thanked Captain FitzMaurice with glad eyes.

"Hermione," he whispered, "I would do much more for your sake, if you would only believe it!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOW THE ADMIRAL BROUGHT HERMIONE INTO PORT.

CAPTAIN FITZMAURICE was sitting at the Admiral's breakfast-table with an open letter before him.

"Uncle, I am offered another ship," he said.

"And you mean to accept it?"

"I suppose so. I can hardly give up my profession at my age, especially when I have so little inducement to do it."

"You'll not sail out of this port, my lad, till Hermione Challoner has consented to become your wife," answered the old Admiral, doggedly. "My mind is set upon the match, and has been ever since I have known the girl. I'll be shot if I don't marry her myself if you make so many difficulties about it," ended the old man hotly.

"Your mind cannot be more set upon it than my own uncle," said Douglas FitzMaurice, gravely, "but she doesn't like me. She said so from the first, and I have come to the conclusion that she really meant it. I thought once she was coming round, when she was interested about Arbour Glen, but she's as bad as ever now, and it would be unmanly of me to press her further."

"Pshaw! then I'll ask her myself," shouted the Admiral, in anger.

"I believe you would have a better chance than I should," answered the younger man, impatiently.

"Do you love her, you lubber?" asked the Admiral, in his quaint nautical fashion. "I expected better things from a creditable-looking cruiser like you. I thought you would have boarded her long ago!"

"Heaven knows I long for her love," answered the Captain, passionately, "but I cannot break down the wall of reserve she has built up between us, and I am not going to risk a final rejection at her hands."

"Nonsense! if she said no she would not mean it."

"Pardon me, I think she would mean it; and I should certainly accept her decision."

"More fool you! I'd propose a dozen times till I got her, I'd not be silenced by the first shot; but there! men are not what they were when I was young. If once I had seen a girl to my mind I'd have fired away till she surrendered; but there! I never did, till it was too late."

"Then you met her?" asked his nephew, in surprise.

"Then I met Hermione Challoner, and knew that I had found the best woman on earth; but I couldn't ask such a sacrifice of her, my boy, as to tie herself to an ancient wreck like myself, so I determined to marry her by proxy," he said, with feeling. "Douglas, I love both her and you, and if you let her slip through your fingers your old uncle will find it hard to forgive you."

"But, my dear uncle, what am I to do? I can't make a girl love me who does not," said Captain FitzMaurice, despairingly.

"Bosh! she loves you with all her heart. She only wants management; it wouldn't be natural if she didn't."

"I wish I could agree with you, uncle!"

"Will you follow my wishes?" asked the other abruptly, "to the letter, mind?"

"Certainly, if I can do so."

"Of course you can. Promise to wait for me at a certain spot until I return to you."

"That is not a difficult task!" he laughed.

"Is it not? Wait till you try; and now, you rascal, come along!"

And he led him to a rustic garden-seat, close to the hedge which divided the grounds of Bellefleur House from those of Rippleworth, through which it was easy enough to look, although the seat was well hidden by evergreens.

"If you move an inch I've done with you," whispered the Admiral, and went off at an unusual pace for his gouty feet, out at his own gate and into that of Rippleworth, when he soon perceived the slight, graceful form of Hermione in her rosary, cutting flowers, and dropping them into a basket which hung upon her arm.

"Ship ahoy!" shouted the old man, and with a bright face the girl went swiftly to his side. Douglas FitzMaurice (looking between the leaves) wondering at the sweetness of her smile, and the mobility of the features, which so seldom relaxed for him.

"Good Heavens!" he muttered. "Can she really care for the old man? That would, indeed, account for all," and he grasped the wooden arm of the chair fiercely.

"Hermione, my dear! Come and sit down over here, under the shade of that tree?" said the Admiral, a little feebly. "I've news to tell you."

"Good or bad?" she asked, looking at him with interest.

"Well, my dear, I think you will consider

it good; but although in one sense I may agree with you, in another I can't."

"I don't follow you," she said, impatiently.

"Whom does it concern?"

"My nephew."

"Oh!"

"You have lost interest in the theme," said he, rising. "I won't trouble you with it. There was a time, Miss Hermione, when you used to be gentle and kind to a desolate old man; when your bright ways were the sunshine upon the rough path of his solitary life; but that season has passed, and there are clouds in the sky, and rocks ahead. I'm afraid to speak in these days. I'll go home!"

"No you won't!" cried Hermione, reproachfully. "And I have as much cause to complain as you have. There was a time when I had a dear, kind old friend, who was ever so good to me, and never teased or worried me at all; but those days are over," she ended, with trembling lips, "and everything seems all worry, and most miserable."

"Well, my dear, I meant it for the best," he said, with affected penitence. "I don't pretend to misunderstand you. It was the one wish of my heart to see you and Douglas united, because I thought you were cut out for each other, and would both be really happy. But, there! my dear, think no more about it. I have pocketed my disappointment, and I own I was wrong. My nephew would never care to wed a girl who could not give herself to him body and soul. Half a heart would not suit the boy, nor a wife who could show him a proud spirit. I can't say but what he took to you at first. In fact, it was love at first sight, Miss Hermione; but affection is a plant which needs a woman's sunshine to make it grow; and you know, my dear, you took pains to scorch and wither up the blossoms of his love; and now it need trouble you no more."

"Not trouble me?" she echoed, with something very like a sob of despair rising in her throat.

"No, lass; you'll not see the lad again. He'll bother you no more. He's off to sea again! He's valued by the Admiralty, if he is not by the ladies; and has another ship offered to him."

Hermione turned privet white.

"And will he not come even to say good-bye?" she asked, pressing her hand to her heart.

"Better not, unless you wish it!" he said, eyeing her keenly.

"I wish it!" she cried, with a hysterical gasp. "How absurd! Have I ever shown that I wish for his society?"

"No, you haven't; and he has taken your very broad hint at last. Hermione, my dear, make yourself quite happy. Douglas is far too proud to seek you any further; and I hope he will soon find some nice girl to take away any shade of disappointment which may linger in his heart. And now, my dear, good-bye! If you have any message for him I'll deliver it."

Tears rose, and dimmed the soft, dark eyes, but Hermione would not let one fall. "Yes! tell him that I wish him well," she said, as firmly as she could. "And oh! old friend, if ever he cares for another girl, let both him and her alone, to manage their own affairs. People little know what mischief they do by interference."

"Well, that's gratitude!" grumbled the old man, with a twinkle in his grey eyes. "I'll leave you, Miss Hermione, until you're more amiably disposed towards me. Of course I know what you mean, and I'm blessed if I ever try to help anyone any more. I'll say with Paul Pry, 'if ever I do a kind action again;' but make yourself happy, as I said before, my nephew shall trouble you no further. Good-bye!"

And the Admiral moved off in an apparent huff, without even a clasp of Hermione's small hand.

Nor did she try to stop him, but sat still, and white, the very picture of sorrow; and

the tears she had kept back so bravely, while the Admiral was with her, fell in hot scalding drops, now that she was alone; and her trouble was barbed by the self-condemning knowledge that her own pride, independence, and perversity alone had stood, not only in the way of her own happiness, but in that of the man she loved.

"It is all my own fault!" she murmured, in a voice so broken with feeling, that the listener behind the hedge with difficulty caught her words.

"What mockery to tell me to be happy! I shall never be that again. Going away! without one word or look, or hand-clasp—perhaps never to meet any more, or to find him married to another! No, no! better not to meet in this world than to bear that sight. Oh! my darling, my darling! you will never know how I love you; how the heart of Hermione Challoner, said to be so proud and hard melted at your first look, and will remain yours till it ceases to beat! It is none the less yours, my love, because you will never know it—because the secret must rest buried in my heart for ever. And what might not my life have been? Surely he *did* love me, till I killed his affection by my wilful folly; and now there is only one thing for me to do, to bear my punishment as best I can. I wonder if girls often thus wreck their own peace and joy! I have but one comfort now. He loved me once—I am sure he did!"

And Hermione buried her wet face in her hands, and rocked herself slowly to and fro in her pain. And while she was thus accusing herself, the handsome face of Douglas FitzMaurice became animated, eager, and happy.

He drew nearer and nearer, and at length, parting the hedge with his hands, forced his way through the gap he had made; but so absorbed was the girl in her grief that she never heard a sound, and knew nothing of his presence, nor that her sorrow was over for ever, till a pair of strong arms were about her, and her own speech was continued,—

"He loved you once, and he loves you still, and he *will* love you for ever, Hermione!" he cried joyfully. "My own, naughty, proud darling, let me forgive you! Sweetheart! I have been eavesdropping. I have heard all that passed between you and my good old uncle, all which you said to your own dear self, and misunderstandings are over between us now henceforward."

Then he released her from his embrace, and stood with his arms outstretched, waiting.

"I love you, Hermione!" he said, in a low, clear voice, which thrilled through her whole being. "Darling! will you come home of your own free will?"

She lifted her dark eyes to his with sudden joy, and without another word she rose from her seat and nestled to his breast, and as his arms closed eagerly around her, and imprisoned her, the last regret left her that she had found the master of her heart.

The last misunderstanding was cleared away; the last cloud had vanished. All those two knew, was the fact that they were ecstatically happy, and that they loved one another deeply and truly.

Suddenly a voice broke in upon their love-dream.

"You young dog!" exclaimed the Admiral; "and you promised to stay where I left you till I came back! I'll try you by drum-head court-martial for making a fool of me, and for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman! The sooner you're off to sea the better. Making love under my very nose, when I had told the lady all was over between you! Oh! the perversity of human nature! it's incredible, incredible!" and the laughing face of the old man beamed happily at the lovers through the disordered hedge.

## CHAPTER IX.

MR. HARDCASTLE'S SECRET.

CAPTAIN FITZMAURICE did not accept the command of that ship; and Admiral Long-



more, with many chuckles, remarked, that the naval authorities might whistle for his nephew's services in the future, for fond as he was of his profession, he was still more fond of Hermione!

Rylands had been filled with excitement, there were so many weddings to be attended and talked about. The editor and the authoress really did make a match of it, and all the village thought it a very wise thing for them both to do, similarity of taste and occupation, being a valuable addition to the domestic happiness, and one house being cheaper to keep up than two; by which it will be seen, that Rylands was blessed with common sense, and as the bride and bridegroom were neither of them as young as they once were, the village-folk spoke little of the love, and more of the convenience of things, which was to unite their hearts or interests.

The wedding of Hermione Challoner was regarded from a more romantic point of view, as well as that of Maud St. George.

The sailor lover proved every whit as impatient as the civilian, and it was settled that the Colonel was to be deserted by both his children on one day, which he said, with playful sadness, was hardly fair. But neither Herbert nor Hermione had any intention of deserting their father; and in making plans for their own happiness did not forget his. And it was arranged that he should divide his time between his two children and his own home, so that he would have but little space to feel dull.

Hermione also made the Admiral agree to spend a long period with them every season, and promised to visit him at Bellerophon House.

Rylands approved of the weddings. The people said there had never been such pretty ones in the parish before, nor so handsome a couple as Hermione and her sailor husband; while Maud looked very pretty in the eyes of the man who loved her, if she could not compete with the statuesque beauty of the perfect brunette.

There were the usual flowers and favours, tasteful dresses, smiling faces, and good wishes; and more than a usual amount of love and happiness to crown the double wedding with success. And the two young couples went out into the world to fight the battle of life hand-in-hand; and the people of Rylands were left to go on much as they did before.

They had still one theme of conversation to talk about, which puzzled, while it interested them—namely, The Hardcastles.

It soon became known that Arbour Glen had been thoroughly repaired through Hermione Challoner's influence with the Fitzmaurices; but no one was more surprised than Hermione herself at the strange turn events took upon Mr. Hardcastle's obtaining possession of the house, which he was to hold for three years as a tenant without paying any rent.

He soon became quite a different man—no longer morose and melancholy, but important and self-asserting. He dressed well himself, and dressed his daughter well too.

He kept several servants, and a good table. He gave large subscriptions to local charities, and entertainments to his neighbours; and last, though not least, he absolutely forbade any engagement between Elinor and Mr. Thornhill, the poor banker's clerk, who he said was no match for her; but nothing would induce him to explain the sudden, apparent change in his circumstances, nor his conduct regarding his daughter's engagement.

He said it must be broken off, and he expected her to obey him. So far Elinor Hardcastle had never disputed her father's will; but now the firm, yet gentle girl positively refused to give up the man she loved, and who had loved her so honestly and well, without some powerful reason being assigned for her doing so; and the argument waxed fierce upon the man's part, while Elinor held to her

promise with all the pertinacity of her steadfast nature.

But it was a deep sorrow to her to be thus obliged to stand out against her father's will and wishes, and she longed for the old days of poverty, the mended dresses, and the permitted talks under the trees in the little back garden at Chandos-terrace.

It would not have been nature had she not still met her lover, but she did so with a saddened spirit, and there was little of the element of hope in either of their hearts. All Rylands knew that Mr. Hardcastle had forbidden the match, and that he had higher views for his daughter, and had given Mr. Thornhill the out direct; and Rylands never encouraged children in disobedience, more especially when the father in question was a newly-risen star, and gave parties for their benefit.

Still they were at a loss to understand his evident accession to wealth, or his reticence upon the subject, which, however, would have seemed more strange had he not always been reserved and silent concerning his own affairs, of which none of them knew any more than they did when he first came among them; and for two years things went on in the same manner at Arbour Glen, when Mr. Hardcastle became seriously ill with fever, and in his delirium he both did and said strange things, so strange that Elinor dismissed other nurses from his room, and took the entire charge of the patient herself.

"I found it in that secret panel!" he said, one day, excitedly. "See, it lies in that old wainscot. I came upon it accidentally at first, but I never rested till I found out what it meant. It was an old, faded paper—yellow with age, and it said *seven by fourteen*! Nothing more, that was all I had to go upon; but Jack Hardcastle used to be a sharp hand; he knew a thing or two in his time, and he hasn't forgotten all the odd tricks yet. Ha! ha! he wasn't to be done. He had heard of men keeping such dates for their own guidance—seven by fourteen! It haunted me night and day!" he cried, wildly; "but I found it out. I destroyed the paper, but I shall never forget. Hush! my head is confused! I might not remember! I might—I might! I'll see if I'm all right still. Two screws—only two screws to keep the secret! Who says it isn't mine?" he cried, savagely. "Nonsense! it has lain there sixty—seventy years. 'Findings keepings!' I was a schoolboy once—I have not forgotten! Haunted! phaw! the old miser never haunts me, although I have found his hoard!" and he laughed wildly.

"It's mine! mine! I love it as he did! and if Elinor will not promise the secret shall die with me. She shall never know—never! Let her be a beggar! Broke her mother's heart, did I? and I shall break hers. No, no, not while she has the golden balm to heal it. If she obeys me, it shall all be hers—all!"

And the invalid turned restlessly upon his pillow, and fell into a troubled sleep, while the sad, pale face of his daughter watched him with a growing fear at her heart.

The doctor said he could not save Mr. Hardcastle's life, and night and day the girl watched by the side of the dying man, listening to his ravings, and doing her best to soothe his sufferings, and to keep others from hearing the words, which, to her mind, were so fraught with meaning.

There intervened before the end a time of consciousness to the man who thought his secret in his own keeping.

"Elinor," he said, feebly, "am I very ill? Tell me the truth."

"Very, father dear," she answered, with tear-dimmed eyes. "Yes, I must tell you the truth—you are very near the end! And, oh, father, dear! may I send for Sir Randall St. George? He would know better than I with what words to cheer you through the dark valley."

"So it has come to that!" he answered, with a startled look. "Well, I'm no coward—I'm not afraid. But, Elinor, I must speak

to you before I die. I have a secret, which, if I reveal to you, you will be a rich woman; but, if you defy your dying father you will live and die a beggar, or live upon the wretched stipend of a penniless banker's clerk! My dear, it is in my power to leave you great wealth—never mind how; but promise me that you will give up Edwin Thornhill, and all shall be yours. Promise! promise!" and he grasped her by the wrist. "Remember, Elinor, it is my last wish, and your last chance."

"Oh, father!" she answered, with hands tightly clasped together in her anguish of spirit, "I cannot give you the promise you ask! I would rather be ever so poor by Edwin's side than inherit the most vast fortune, for I love him truly!"

"Then my secret dies with me!" he said, in anger.

A great and sudden change passed over the face of the dying man, as though a veil of crape were drawn across it, and when it had subsided the spirit of Elinor's father had fled.

## CHAPTER X.

### ELINOR'S GOLDEN DREAM.

THE funeral over, and Elinor Hardcastle left alone, she sat thinking over the words of her dead father, wondering what they had really meant, and what it was her duty to do; and at last decided to try and find out the truth for herself.

"Seven by fourteen!" she repeated, and she thought that he had referred to something in his own chamber.

She went up there timidly, and passed the bed where the still form had so lately rested with a feeling of nervousness, as though he would rise up and reproach her for endeavouring to discover the secret which he had distinctly said with his last breath should die with him.

"Two screws!" Where should she find them? He had spoken of a panel, but she looked for it in vain.

She examined the wainscots of the room and the walls, she turned up the carpet and looked at the boards, but no nearer did she come to her father's secret, and the day closed in.

Then came a tap at the door, and the servant told her that Mr. Thornhill was waiting to see her, and she descended, her heart very full of love for him.

She had bidden him remain away so long as her father should be in the house, for he had forbidden her lover's entrance there, but his affectionate words had cheered her by letter, and he was making arrangements even now for her comfort.

"Elinor, darling!" he said, clasping her in his arms, and holding her firmly to his breast. "We have only one another now; when will you come home to me?"

"How can you afford to marry yet, Edwin?" she asked, looking honestly in his face.

"What is enough for one, dear love, is nearly enough for two, and I have saved a little. I thought we would take your old home in Chandos-terrace, and buy a little furniture with my savings."

She stood still beside him, her father's dying words ringing in her ears. Should she tell them to her lover?

"I think this furniture must legally be mine," she continued, after a pause, "although my father told me I was to have nothing," she said, wonderingly.

"Did he, darling? Then we will not touch a stick of it. Have you found no will yet?"

"No, none; my poor father never dreamed of dying so soon—he left no orders."

"And have you found where he got his money of late?"

"No! and, Edwin, if I had, I should not claim it, for he did not wish me to have it."

"Still, if he has died without a will it is

yours; and you will have to arrange what is to be done with it."

"Do you want it, Edwin?" she asked, regarding him earnestly.

He took both her hands, and looked down into the depth of her eyes.

"No! little one," he said, softly; "give it to a hospital or what you please. I want my wife, that is all. Darling! when will you come home to me?"

"When you please now, Edwin," she replied. "You have made me so happy; but I need not trouble about the hospital, my dear, for I have only found money enough to give the servants their wages, and pay the funeral expenses; and nothing whatever to guide me as to whence my father derived or drew his income, save the papers relating to the small life annuity, upon which we existed so many years, which died with him, as he always said it would."

"Were there no cheques, accounts, or bankers' books?"

"None that I can find."

"That is odd; but don't trouble about anything, my love. Come home, and let me make you happy. When shall it be, little woman? I have waited long enough, and have been very lonely."

"Come again to-morrow night," Edwin," she said, "and we will then decide everything. To-day I have gone through a good deal, and cannot even think."

"You look very tired, little one! I shall run away now, I advise you to go straight to bed."

And Elinor followed his wishes, and after tossing about for some hours, unable to drive away the many cares which oppressed her, she fell asleep, and dreamed a golden dream.

Dreamed that she had turned out to be very wealthy, and that she had shared her riches with the man she loved; that they were married, and had children fair around them, and were doing great good among their fellow-men, feeding the hungry, comforting the sorrowful, and carrying out a great work, which only could be done by the rich, whose hearts are capable of real sympathy with those around them—hearts like her own and Edwin Thornhill's. And the sun streamed into her room in its morning glory, and touching the fair face, broke the dream in two.

She sighed as it faded from her mind like the vanishing mirage from the eyes of the desert traveller, and she saw before her, life as it would be. Happy, perhaps, with the man she loved; but one of hard work for him and her, and no possibility of doing the good which had been pictured to her sleeping mind.

She tried to shut it all out, and turned her eyes up to the strange oaken beams of her wooden ceiling, and thought she had never seen such anywhere but in that old house; the beams running one way, and the thinner wood across, and she fell to counting them. Ten beams one way, and thirty boards the other, with smaller beams across again, for ornament or strength.

And once more she fell to counting them. When she reached the mystic number of seven she stopped, and springing from her bed, put on her slippers and dressing-gown, and went to her father's room.

Seven by fourteen!

She looked up at the ceiling—it was just like that in her own room, and upon the seventh beam there was undoubtedly a screw.

No one else was awake in the house. It was very still and quiet. With beating heart she went out on the landing to fetch the oaken ladder, or steps, which her father had had made some time before, ostensibly to get up to a window which opened out upon the roof. It was heavy, and she carried it with some difficulty, and fixing it between the skirting and the seventh beam, found that the height exactly corresponded, and that it was perfectly safe to ascend; and her heart beat wildly, as she felt convinced that the ladder had been really made to fit into this particular spot, and that she was on the borderland of

her father's secret, which he said should die with him.

Even now she hesitated, but some power she could not resist urged her on. She found a screw-driver, and mounting the ladder, ascended to the top, and perceived a second screw.

With trembling fingers she unfastened them both, and became aware that there was a trap door, which was fastened down behind the beams, and gave no evidence whatever of existence.

With intense excitement she raised it, and at first could see nothing within; but as she became accustomed to the dim light, she gave a startled cry, and stretching out her hands she buried them in gold!

Here was her golden dream come true. She might wed her Edwin, and live with him in luxury, and if she were blessed with children she could educate them and provide for them well. She could feed the hungry, clothe those in poverty—comfort the sick, and sorrowful, and suffering. These hoards of wealth would do it all, and her dream might indeed be a reality. She sat upon the edge of the trap-door, gazing at the wonderful sight before her, and thinking of that poor loving woman, waiting for her lover to become rich, and believing in his poverty.

And he, with his ever-growing sin of avarice, closing his heart to its natural affections, and waiting in his turn until she should inherit the fortune of her uncle, which would enable them to live upon her property and leave his beloved gold untouched.

Money had certainly brought no good to the man to whom this great store of gold had belonged, and her father had found it, and Elinor did not think it had raised him either.

She turned sick and giddy with these thoughts, and descending the ladder, she sat down upon a chair, with her eyes fixed upon her father's bed.

What good had finding this wealth done him? He had had more luxuries, more animal gratification for nearly two years of his life, and had died with his heart as hard as a mill-stone. And he had intended his secret to have died with him, lest she should benefit by it after her disobedience.

But he had died without a will, and the wealth was, she supposed, all hers now; but he had said she was not to have it, and she thought it had better be given to a hospital.

Suddenly she sprang to her feet, and pressed her hand to her brow.

"Oh, father! it never was yours!" she murmured, as though he were really present. "If it belonged to Mr. Miles—as it assuredly must have done—he left it with all the rest of his money which was discovered, to the woman who was to have been his wife, and she left it to Mr. FitzMaurice!"

For some time she stood dazed and stupefied.

"Oh, father! why did you keep it?" she moaned. "And we have actually been using this—this stolen gold—and living upon it!" and she shivered as her eyes rested upon the bed where the man she was condemning had died so lately; and leaving the room, she looked the door, and took away the key, then, hastily dressing herself, she left the house and went swiftly to Chandos-terrace.

Edwin Thornhill was an early riser, and looking out of his window he saw Elinor, and making a sign that he was coming he quickly joined her, and they walked together back to Arbour Glen; and on their way she told him of her father's strange talk, and of her own golden dream; and of her awaking to find the miser's hoard and all the thoughts which filled her mind, and he listened with a grave face, her hand lying upon his arm, with his own pressed upon it protectingly.

"And what does my darling mean to do with this wonderful find?" he asked, looking down earnestly into the pure sweet face upturned to his.

"Edwin," she said, softly, "it belongs to

Mr. FitzMaurice, not to me; and I want you to take me up with you to the bank to-day, to tell him all about it, and ask him to let me give up Arbour Glen; for, Edwin, I have quite made up my mind to ask you to take care of me at once."

"That I will, my own true girl! And, Elinor, my darling, I am indeed proud of you. Such a temptation might have proved too strong for a weaker mind. You have decided to act rightly!"

"And you do not mind not having any of the money, dear?" she inquired, her sweet face glowing with joy. "Oh, Edwin! I am so glad!"

"No, sweetheart, it would bring us no blessing," he said, decidedly. "If we are poor we will be honest!"

And she gave him a bright look, and they passed into the door of Arbour Glen; and she led him upstairs, and showed him that wonderful store of gold, and then he put the screws back for her, and carried the ladder again to its usual place, and remained to have breakfast with the girl he loved now more deeply than ever.

And Elinor accompanied him to London by his usual train, to the wonder of such of her neighbours as saw them start. And she and Edwin Thornhill had a private interview with Mr. FitzMaurice, the banker; and the girl told him all the story in a plain, unvarnished fashion, which pleased him greatly, wishing that it were in her power to repay what her father had used.

She begged him to take immediate possession of Arbour Glen and the (until now) unknown hoard of gold.

And he had promised to do so, begging her to keep the matter secret until the store should have been removed; and, pressing her hand with hearty goodwill he sent her away with a lighter heart, and started off without loss of time for his son's house, to tell him and his wife the unlooked-for news.

Hermione received it with a warm flush of pleasure upon her handsome face.

"Douglas," she said, with pride, "did I not tell you what Elinor Harcastle is? Strong for good, and to resist evil?"

"Yes; you were right, and you were wise in making a friend of her. But, father, such an act should not go unrewarded."

"That girl would not touch a penny of the money were I to offer her the whole of it," returned Mr. FitzMaurice, quickly.

"But her lover might. She is going to marry young Thornhill, is she not, Hermione?"

"Of course she is. And, Douglas, if you will not mind it I'll ask her here, and let her be married from our house. How lonely she must be at Arbour Glen!"

"The very thing, dear! We will go down to-morrow, and bring her back with us."

"I am glad you are going to do that," said Mr. FitzMaurice, "for I couldn't bear the idea of the girl going back there alone, so I sent her lover with her. I'm sure he would not take the money any more than she would. But I'll tell you what, my boy. We want a manager at one of our branch banks. The salary is five hundred a year—and Thornhill now only gets a hundred and fifty—so that they will be able to marry and live in comparative comfort."

"Nothing could be better," cried Hermione, excitedly, "and my dear little friend will be as happy as the day is long!"

So, when Edwin Thornhill returned to his work that afternoon, he found that, to the bewilderment of his fellow-clerks, he had been raised to be the manager of a branch bank of considerable pretension, and was to undertake his new duties without loss of time.

And the following day Mr. FitzMaurice took possession of Arbour Glen, and the gold was secretly removed.

The servants were paid and discharged, the bills settled, and Hermione had carried off Elinor.



And, having fitted her up with the necessary trousseau, she kissed the fair face of the happy young bride in her own drawing-room before she started with the husband of her choice to take up her position in life as the wife of the bank manager in the market town of Manerby.

[THE END]

## WHEN SUMMER CAME.

JEAN DORMER was spending the autumn up in Cumberland with her friend Mrs. Mayland. The long rambles and rides with her congenial hostess, the paucity of troublesome visitors, and the sense of rest after the rush of a Scarborough season were pleasant to the soul of Jean Dormer, who cherished vague dreams and aspirations which her social success as a beauty and heiress failed altogether to satisfy.

She had been out for a long gallop, this bright morning, and, much as she enjoyed Rose's society, was in a mood when she did not regret that her friend had been detained at home by a pile of tiresome business letters.

On the way back, Jean selected a road that was somewhat unfamiliar to her—which, of course, added to its attractiveness. At the foot of the last steep hill, the groom's horse cast a shoe, and the groom was obliged to stop in a blacksmith's shop, near by, to have it replaced.

Miss Dormer was much too good a horse-woman to have any fear about riding alone. She pushed forward, so occupied between her thoughts and the admiration of the landscape, that she paid less attention to Dancer than prudence demanded; for, though as good-hearted a creature as ever lived, Dancer was nearly as nervous as a fine lady, and had a trick of taking fright as easily; and, when frightened, he was apt to behave almost as foolishly, as if he had been a human being.

They were passing a long sweep of low brick wall surmounted by an iron fence, which enclosed the ground of Edgewood, one of the finest places in the vicinity.

Jean cast longing glances at the glimpse of lovely dells and green lawns visible through the great trees, and at length the old mansion, with its twisted chimneys and broad terrace, came in view.

She was thinking what a pity it seemed that such a residence should have remained so long shut up, of no benefit or use, for Jean had utilitarian theories among numerous others, and was haunted by occasional doubts as to whether anybody had a right to be very rich.

Then she thought of the melancholy story of the owner of Edgewood, and pitied him out of her womanly kindness for being a wanderer on the face of the earth, with the shadow of a cruel suspicion hanging over his path, beneath the gloom of which he must walk to the end of his days.

She was brought suddenly down from her reverie by a sudden mad plunge on the part of Dancer which would have unseated an ordinary rider.

In a flash the horse had the bit between his teeth, and was tearing along at a terrific pace, driven frantic by the sight of a creaking wagon with a white curtain fluttering in the breeze like a sail, which had unexpectedly emerged from a narrow cross road directly in his face.

Dancer's speed increased each instant. Jean did not lose her presence of mind, but she lost all control over the terrified animal, and she realized that some dreadful injury, or death, was imminent.

On the horse tore, walls and trees seeming to join in the frantic race. Jean felt herself grow dizzy and sick; she clutched blindly at the pommel; then she heard a loud shout from a man's voice, perceived that she was close to a pair of open gates, could dimly see

a gentleman in the road frantically waving his hat.

Startled from his course, Dancer swerved and plunged up the avenue. Repairs had been going on in the carriage-way, and checked his pace a little. Farther on were heaped piles of gravel, which proved such a hindrance that the gentleman was enabled to overtake him and seize the bridle.

Dancer recovered his senses as suddenly as he had yielded to his spasm of alarm, and stood quiet and repentant while the gentleman helped Miss Dormer out of the saddle, and assisted her to a garden seat close at hand.

By the time he had fastened Dancer to a tree, Jean's vertigo had passed; she was able to look about, speak collectedly, and try to thank her preserver.

He was an entire stranger to her—a tall, elegant looking man of perhaps five-and-thirty, with the saddest face she had ever seen, and great, sombre eyes that made her feel as if she saw a soul watching its own misery—a misery which had lasted so long that it was as familiar as life itself.

He answered her thanks by a grave bow, then said,—

"You will be more comfortable on the terrace; it is only a very short walk."

He offered his arm with an air of such quiet authority that Jean accepted it in passive obedience, and presently found herself established in a comfortable easy-chair on the broad stone flags. The gentleman disappeared indoors for a moment, and then came back with a glass of water. She drank eagerly, and felt quite restored.

"I don't know how to thank you," she said, with a faint smile.

"There is no need—and you are better?" he responded.

"Quite well again. I—I think it was not fright—"

"I am very sure it was not," he rejoined, as she hesitated.

He said nothing more. An odd sensation of shyness crept over Jean, and, just to break the silence, she said,—

"I thought this place was shut up—I am sure I was told so when I first came into the neighbourhood."

"It has been, for a long while," was the answer; "but I surprised my old servants last night by coming home unexpectedly. I am Carroll Thayne."

He looked full in her face while speaking; there was an expression in his eyes as if he almost expected to see her shrink at the name. Oddly enough, the possibility of his being Mr. Thayne had not occurred to her; but she caught that look, and, with feminine quickness, was able to repress even a glance of surprise.

"Then I am among the first to welcome you back," she said, in a frank, genial way, which was one of her great charms—possessing at once a simplicity that was almost childlike, and a womanly dignity few could equal. "You know my friend Mrs. Mayland? I am visiting her—my name is Jean Dormer—I think, at least, I ought to introduce myself, after this unceremonious and involuntary intrusion."

She laughed, and Jean's laugh was like a little peal of silver bells. Mr. Thayne only smiled, as he answered,—

"I am very glad the gates happened to be open to receive you."

"I daren't think what would have happened if they hadn't been, and you standing there," she began, but broke off with a shiver.

"Don't think about it—when anything painful can be forgotten—it is wise to forget," he said, quickly, then added, "Your horse looks as quiet as a lamb, after his insane behaviour. He looks ashamed of himself, too, which speaks well for his disposition."

"Oh, he is the kindest creature imaginable, only he takes fright so easily!" Jean replied, and explained how the accident occurred.

Then she remembered that she ought to take her departure, and said,—

"Dancer and I must go home, or Mrs. Mayland will think we are lost."

"But you will hardly like to ride alone—"

"Oh, thanks, it is perfectly safe," Jean interrupted, rising.

"I—I only meant to propose sending a groom to follow you," Mr. Thayne rejoined, and she comprehended that he thought she had been afraid he meant to offer his society, and that she shrank from accepting it.

"Dancer will behave with the wisdom of Solomon," she said, looking straight at him with her beautiful clear eyes full of cordiality and gratitude. "You must not think me ungrateful because I can't thank you—when you come to see Mrs. Mayland she will do it better. You will have two welcomes—one for yourself, the other on my account."

Her three-and-twenty years and her being so accustomed to be treated as a power in the social world enabled her to say this with graceful ease, but again she only received a bow.

"I will bring your horse," Mr. Thayne said, and very soon Jean was in the saddle.

He walked by her side down the avenue, and, as they reached the gates, Miss Dormer saw her groom turning a corner of the road, and waited for him to come up.

"I hope you will come soon and let Mrs. Mayland thank you," were her last words, and she frankly extended her hand as she spoke.

"You are very kind," he said, just touching the tips of the dainty gloved fingers with his; "very kind!"

Jean rode on thinking.

"It was only decent to show plainly what I felt; it might have looked forward, to another man—but he understood. Perhaps he was not obliged to me, though—he looks as if he were too proud even to accept sympathy. How he has suffered!"

Between fright at Jean's accident, wonder at the odd chance which made Carroll Thayne her preserver, and delight at hearing of his return, little Mrs. Mayland was in a great state of excitement all the evening.

"Poor, poor fellow!" she kept repeating. "I have never seen him since it all happened, five—yes, fully five—years ago. He never came back here; several people wrote to him. We who knew him never believed the awful story. But he had suffered so terribly—people behaved so like brutes; and the papers—oh, those dreadful papers!"

"I cannot understand how a man, such as you have described him to me, could have got mixed up with such people," Jean said, slowly.

"Oh, my dear—men!" cried Mrs. Mayland, with a ring of scornful pity in her voice. "He went out to California, in search of a distant relative—Horace Warrington—who had been brought up like one of the family. Well, this Horace went to the bad; it was wonderful how patient Carroll used to be with the worthless fellow."

"I never heard of him. Where is he?"

"Oh, dead; killed somewhere in Australia, in a drunken brawl, a year or so ago. If Carroll had only stopped at home, instead of rushing off to San Francisco to try and help the man, when he knew it was useless, he would have been spared all this trouble."

"But—but it was about some woman—his wife—"

"Yes, I suppose she was," Mrs. Mayland admitted, hesitatingly. "It was said Carroll denied it; then a certificate was found. Oh, that was what made it look blackest against him. But he never killed her—never!"

"Of course not," Jean assented, with a shudder. She could not recall the expression in Carroll Thayne's eyes and fail to believe in his innocence.

"And the creature was wicked—bad—that was proved," Mrs. Mayland went on; "very beautiful, though. Perhaps that—" She broke off abruptly. "I never told you the whole story—I can't now. But this is what happened: That Amy Dorrance left San Francisco with Carroll for Sacramento, I believe;

but never reached there. She disappeared while stopping in some little village. Carroll had been seen with her there two days before. Well, somebody found her hat among the bushes near the river. There was talk, but nothing happened till weeks after; then a body was found, miles off, down the stream. It had got water-logged—was in a dreadful state; but it was recognised as hers."

"Oh!" groaned Jean.

"Carroll was arrested. He succeeded in proving an alibi for the two days; but the papers said the jury had been packed and the judge bought—such an excitement all over the country! Oh, there was talk of lynching him! Of course there was not evidence even to send him to prison, but most people believed him guilty. Many do still—not I, never for a minute; nobody could who really knew him. Such a future as he might have had—rich, clever—and it was all ruined!"

"He went away at once?"

"Yes; sailed for China; journeyed round the world; has been wandering all these years. Poor Carroll! to think of his coming back and being alone in that great house, which used to be so gay when his mother was alive. I can't talk about it," cried Mrs. Mayland, wiping away her tears. "I shall write to him before I sleep."

She kept her word, and sent one of her most charming letters, eloquent with thanks for the service he had rendered her friend, expressing the satisfaction she felt at his return, and winding up with an entreaty that his first visit should be to her, and a prettily imperious command to have it speedily paid.

She received a courteous note in reply, explaining that he considered the thanks due from him for her kindness; but Jean noticed that he did not say a word in regard to the invitation to come to the house.

Days passed, but he did not appear; and, though several of his old friends called on him, the two ladies learned that Mr. Thayne had not crossed the threshold of any neighbour's dwelling since his arrival home, which had been so unexpected as to make the old servants at first inclined to believe him his own ghost.

One lovely sunset, when Mrs. Mayland and Jean were returning from a long walk among the hills, they came face to face with Carroll Thayne at the edge of the wood.

Jean perceived him first. She was sure that he saw them, and made a movement to turn the other way; but Mrs. Mayland caught sight of him, and rushed eagerly forward, seized his two hands, and poured out such a flood of welcome and thanks that the most moody misanthrope in the world could not have resisted her sweet friendliness.

"There!" she said, at length. "I have talked myself out of breath, so Miss Dormer can have a chance to speak."

"I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Thayne," said Jean, holding out her hand.

She uttered no expression of gratitude; she comprehended that he wanted to hear none; but the light in her beautiful eyes sank like a benison into the outcast's tired soul.

"You must see us safe to the road," said Mrs. Mayland. "It will soon be dusk, and my prophetic spirit is troubled with visions of tramps, and all sorts of horrors."

The three walked on together, conversing easily. Mrs. Mayland wisely refrained from asking why he had not called. They spoke of the scenery, of foreign lands; and Jean, who had never been in Greece, began asking questions which drew him out; and he talked as she had never heard any man do—simply naturally, without the slightest attempt at effect, yet showing that he had not only a thoroughly cultivated mind, but was both poet and artist in the bargain.

When they reached Briar Cottage, it was impossible to resist Mrs. Mayland's determination to make him go indoors, and, once there, he had to stay.

"You can do without dinner for a change," Rose said; "Jean and I dine early, now that

we are alone, but you shall have a high tea which will make up for the lack."

Mr. Thayne spent the evening; Jean sang, in that marvellous contralto voice of hers, and Mr. Thayne played her accompaniments; then he let his fingers wander off into exquisite melodies of Schubert and Chopin, and, between the music and animated conversation, the hours passed quickly.

But Jean observed that Mr. Thayne made no promise to come again. Again days elapsed; each morning Rose was sure he would appear, each night she went to bed disappointed. Then they met him twice, once he went home with them: the morning after, they learned that he had departed as abruptly as he had come.

But before the week was over, Jean met him one evening, when she was out on horseback.

"I am glad to see you back," she said; "we heard that you had gone—you did not even bid us good-bye!"

"Yes, I am back."

He said this and paused, with a long breath that was almost a sigh.

"I hope you mean to stay?" she rejoined; "your place is so lovely, and all your old friends will be so glad."

"Then I have friends!" he exclaimed, as if thinking aloud, but added immediately, "I have grown used to solitude, you know; habit is everything."

"And bad habits should be cured," said Jean, forced to speak by an impulse she could not control, though, a moment before, she would not have believed that she should venture to lecture Mr. Thayne. "You have sincere friends here, and they want to see you; nor is it right to lead so solitary a life. Make a beginning; come and see us tomorrow. Return the visits you have received."

She stopped in dismay at herself, but he said gravely—

"I thank you, Miss Dormer. I don't know if it is wise, but I will follow your counsel."

He rode home with her. The next evening he called; and, before long, a daily visit became so much a matter of habit that neither he nor the ladies could consider it any but the most natural thing in the world. Carroll Thayne resolutely shut his eyes, refused to reflect, and the golden days drifted on.

It had been the middle of September when Jean Dormer first met Mr. Thayne. The time went on till the second week of November was at hand; nearly two months had passed, and Jean's sojourn was drawing to an end.

It seemed to her that she had learned to know this new acquaintance better than she did the friends of years—an angel from Heaven could not have induced her to doubt his loyalty and honour. His talents and nobility of soul made her respect him as she had never respected any man save her father, while his terrible sufferings drew her whole soul towards him in a fullness of sympathy that blinded her to any secret and deeper feeling which might be lurking below.

Of himself, Carroll Thayne seldom talked—of his calamity, never; but it was plain that the blight on his life had, in a measure, crushed his energy, and that aid Jean's influence helped to rouse. He had taken up his brush again, was doing earnest work, and Mrs. Mayland and Jean, when they saw the unfinished picture, were full of enthusiasm.

Rose Mayland had floated along, as blind as even very acute people often are to what is happening before their eyes; but, at length, she began to grow uneasy. Once she commenced to watch Thayne, she found ample proof that her fear was correct—poor Carroll had fallen in love with Jean.

It never occurred to her that Jean could entertain any sentiment for him beyond sympathy and friendship. She pitied the man intensely, and felt that a word of warning ought to be spoken to Miss Dormer.

The two were sitting out in the garden,

that evening; the full moon had risen, and was flooding every object with its supernatural light. Both ladies had been silent, for awhile.

Rose said abruptly,—

"I suppose Mr. Thayne was detained at Newburgh, or we should have seen him before now."

"It is still early," Jean answered, quietly.

"I wonder where he will go this winter? Back to Europe, I suppose," continued Rose. "Poor fellow, he will be more lonely than ever after these weeks. Sometimes I am almost sorry that he came here."

"You should not be, if the stay has been pleasant to him," said Jean.

"Ah, my dear, I am afraid it has proved only too pleasant," sighed Rose. "I blame myself now—I ought to have cautioned you, Jean. You will never understand how fascinating you are; even the troop of admirers you have had don't seem to have convinced you."

"Don't talk nonsense!" Jean interrupted, rather sharply.

"I'm afraid it is sad earnest this time," Rose answered.

A feeling that seemed like terror or remorse seized Jean; under it, a strange breathless sensation, as if some new idea had been presented which her mind shrank from contemplating.

"Rose, what do you mean?" she asked, after a brief pause.

"Well, I think I ought to tell you—though it is rather late," Rose said, hesitatingly. "I'm afraid the man loves you. I am sure he does."

"Rose!"

"Don't be vexed. I am not blaming you I am very, very sorry for him, though."

She was interrupted by the approach of a servant; her father had called on a matter of business. Jean sat motionless after her friend's departure; her heart beat to suffocation; her head swam under the might of this new revelation which Rose had flung so unexpectedly upon her.

There was a step among the shrubbery; she turned her head, half rose, then sank back in her chair: Carroll Thayne was standing before her in the moonlight, with a face white and rigid as that of a dead man—only the great dark eyes seemed alive in their passion and anguish.

"I heard," he said, in a voice so quiet and restrained that it sounded fairly hard and stony—"I heard. I did not mean to listen. Well, it is true; I have known it for a long while. I needn't lie—I've known it since the first day we met. I tried to go away; I had to come back—the necessity was stronger than my will. Forgive me!"

"Hush!" she whispered, pressing her hand to her bosom.

"Yes, I know," he went on, in the same monotonous tone; "I ought not to have told you. Don't be angry—I shall never distress you again; I will go away to-morrow. Only just this: let me thank you for the good you have done me. I shall not fall back into the old dreary waste of time—I will work. My poor ruined life shall not be an utter wreck—I shall owe that to you. I—Heaven bless you!"

"Oh, stop—stop!" she moaned; for every word cut like a knife across her heart.

"You don't mind my saying this," he pleaded. "I shall never trouble you—never intrude on you. I will not say a word that could pain you. Of course, I know how mad I have been—what an insult my love must appear; but let me think of you as a man in purgatory might if an angel had visited him."

"Stop, stop!" she tried to say; but her voice died in a gasp.

He went on quickly:

"You are a grand, grand woman! Having known you will give me new strength. My pain is nothing—I am used to that. Oh, I mustn't say any more! This is 'good-bye' for ever: I shall never see your face again."



He turned—he was going; she stretched out her hands, calling,—

"Carroll! Carroll! wait—don't go! If—if I cared—"

He gave one long, deep breath like a groan, stood for an instant motionless as a figure of stone, then he sank on his knees at her feet, bowed his head, and reverently kissed the hem of her dress. Before she could speak he was gone.

Soon after Jean rose, the next morning a servant brought a letter to her room. She had never seen the handwriting, but she knew from whence it came. It was a brief epistle, yet a volume could not have expressed more. By the time this reached her he would be on his journey. He comprehended that her great sympathy and her womanly tenderness had for an instant conspired to delude her into the belief that she might give him some place in her life.

But it could not be; he should prove himself the basest of human beings, were he to accept such a sacrifice on her part. Ere now reflection must have forced her to realise this; her clear judgment would have shown her, too, that what she felt for the outcast was pity and kindness.

Let her remember that the certainty of her compassion would leave an unfading ray of sunshine in the night of his existence. Let her always recollect that she had proved a blessing to a solitary soul; and so he said farewell.

That winter saw Jean back in London, doing the honours of her widowed father's house with her usual queenly grace.

People said that she was more beautiful than ever, that her loveliness had gained a higher type; that all her old faults, her impetuosity, hasty temper, even a certain intolerance of weakness and folly, had entirely disappeared.

But no man among the troop which flocked about her could flatter himself that in word or smile was the least hope offered, and Rose Mayland once told her laughingly that a disappointed suitor had christened her the "ice-queen," and that she was generally called so now.

"I hope she will never melt," said Judge Dormer, who overheard. "I know it is dreadfully selfish on my part, but I don't want prince or duke to carry off my treasure."

"Your treasure is quite safe, papa," rejoined Jean, laughingly. "She will soon be a very rusty one; but you mustn't complain."

"Untarnished always—unspotted from the world," the old judge said, softly, laying his hand on her head.

Jean went to the piano and sang—she must find some outlet for her soul just then.

After she had poured that tide of secret emotion into the passion of her Italian melodies, she came down to a more realistic plane—as was wise to do—regaling her father with his favourite Jacobite songs and other old Scotch airs, which carried him back to his childish days and the blue-eyed mother who had made them so happy.

Towards spring, business called Judge Dormer away, and Jean accompanied him, glad of the change—though, in any case, she would have gone.

A very pleasant trip it proved. Jean enjoyed it thoroughly; for, though she knew that during the dreamy weeks of the past autumn she had been granted a brief glimpse of a future which, under other circumstances, might have rounded life into the fullness of perfection, she was not an unhappy woman. No other love could ever find a place in her heart; but she filled existence with duties, and reaped the reward which every person healthy in soul and body must gain from the patient fulfilment thereof.

The inevitable is a cruel tyrant at first; duty seems a very Moloch to acknowledge as master; but, rightly employed, the soul grows rapidly under that stern discipline, and the flowers of happiness which any human being scatters about the pathway of others will fling

a fragrance over his own desolate road, and return a balm to his wounded heart.

Just before they were ready to leave Bath, Jean went, one morning, with an old friend of her father's—a physician, noted for his successful treatment of insanity—to inspect a private asylum in which the doctor was interested.

Funds were needed for an addition to the buildings, and Jean's ample fortune, independent of her father's wealth, enabled her always to give freely, though her work was so quietly done that she escaped obtaining that most odious sort of popularity expressed under the head of "modera philanthropy."

Before their visit ended, Jean told the doctor that she had decided to assist in the proposed improvements, and the sum she named was so considerable, that he wanted to give the directors the satisfaction of hearing it at once; so he asked her to wait for a little in the visitors' parlour.

As they entered, a lady was seated at the far end of the spacious apartment, and, after glancing towards her, the doctor said in a low voice,—

"Do you remember my telling you of a woman I found in the insane-asylum in Havana, and had transferred here because I was sure that, under proper treatment, she might be cured?"

"Yes—perfectly," Jean answered.

"Well, that is she," the doctor explained. "She has been here for two years, and has entirely recovered her reason; as I told you, it was a disease of the nerves, rather than downright madness. She is to leave to-day. She is very reticent; she only insists that, when first shut up she was not insane."

"Poor soul! Has she any friends? Where is she going?" Jean asked. "Does she need assistance?"

"She mentioned no friends," the doctor replied; "but she means to go North—says she has some money there belonging to her; she would only accept sufficient aid from me to pay for her journey."

As they neared the window, the doctor spoke to the lady; she turned, and Jean saw a face which was still youthful and handsome, though wasted, and bearing the trace either of great suffering or of a very reckless life.

The physician introduced her as "Mrs. Raynor," and left the pair together.

Jean drew her into conversation, and the two talked for some time, the late patient showing that she was in full possession of her reason, and, though not an educated person, evidently bright and clever. As Jean was rising, her watch, insecurely fastened, dropped from her belt.

Mrs. Raynor picked it up; her eye was caught by a charm attached to the chain—an onyx head of a sphinx with jewelled eyes, an ornament which had been Carroll Thayne's.

Jean had found it in the garden, after Thayne left her, on the night of their last meeting, and had worn it ever since.

The woman stared at the head, held it close, moved it further away, then looked towards Miss Dormer, and asked in a strange, breathless tone,—

"Where did you get it? Oh, Heaven! where?"

Her composure had quickly given place to a terrible excitement; her eyes blazed, she shook from head to foot.

Jean's first thought was that the doctor had been deceived—the poor creature was insane still—and said quietly,—

"It is an odd little ornament—is it not?"

"I asked you where you got it!" the woman persisted. "Did Carroll Thayne give it to you?"

"It once belonged to him."

"I knew it!" the other exclaimed.

A sudden light flashed on Jean; she understood now why that face had seemed familiar. She had not been able to rest till she hunted up the file of papers which contained Thayne's trial—it was this woman's portrait she had seen.

"You are Amy Dorrance!" she cried.

"Yes, I am," rejoined the other. "I'm not afraid of Carroll now. I did it all for Horace. What do you think my reward was? We went to Cuba; he got tired of me. I was terribly jealous, and tormented him. He shut me up; I was not mad then, but I went mad."

"Oh, Heaven!" Jean groaned.

"After he stopped paying for my keep I was dreadfully treated. Doctor Thorne found me there, and brought me away. My reason has come back, but I shan't live long—I have heart-disease." She spoke rapidly, but in a repressed, monotonous voice; paused an instant while Jean stood speechless, then added: "Horace is dead; I read about it in some old newspapers. Dead! I'm not afraid of Carroll!"

"Oh, do you know what happened to him?"

"No," she replied, indifferently. "I suppose people thought I had drowned myself—I threw my hat down by the river. I got off, that night, and joined Horace. You see, Carroll would have had us arrested for the forgery—he had found it all out! But I mustn't talk about those things, it makes my head whirl!"

"Don't you know that your —" Jean paused; she could not bring herself to utter the word husband. "Don't you know that Mr. Thayne was accused of having murdered you?"

"No, no—I never knew that! Oh, bad as I was, I couldn't have let that happen—not even for Horace! But he's safe—safe?"

"Yes; that is, he was not convicted. He has borne the suspicion ever since—it has blighted his life!" cried Jean. "Oh, you must speak now and right him—you shall!"

"I'm ready to—call the doctor—I'll tell the whole story," she answered. "Horace is dead—I don't care for myself!"

The story was told—written out—legally attested—Amy Dorrance identified—no possible doubt remaining.

The girl had been married to Horace—she employing Thayne's name in order that Amy might lay a claim for divorce and alimony.

She saw Carroll in San Francisco, and persuaded him to go with her to that mountain village, pretending that he would find Horace there—in reality, to furnish corroborative proof of the marriage. But Carroll discovered the whole scheme through one of Horace's associates, who had a grudge against the pair, and then Thayne's patience gave way. He threatened at once to follow Horace, and to have him imprisoned.

Amy fled that night and joined her husband; since the design had failed, there was nothing left them but flight; her pretence of suicide had been a plan on her part to keep Carroll from tracing Horace by following her.

Before Jean left Bath, Amy Dorrance was dead from a sudden attack of her malady.

When June was drawing to an end, Jean Dormer and her father were established at their country-seat among the Berkshire hills.

It was at the end of a beautiful day—guests were expected to dinner. Jean had dressed early and gone downstairs, looking more queen-like than ever in her white drapery, at once so simple and so elegant.

She went into a boudoir off the drawing-room and out into the balcony to gather some more roses—her cherished running vines grew there, and were her favourite decoration.

As she stood plucking the fragrant blossoms she heard a step inside, and called,—

"I hear you, papa. I am coming."

She stepped back into the boudoir—a mist swam before her eyes—the roses dropped unheeded on the carpet. She heard her name uttered in a voice of such thanksgiving as might burst from the lips of a freed spirit entering the glory of paradise.

"Jean! Jean!"

And Carroll Thayne's arms were holding her fast, and their two hearts throbbed close in that first embrace, which was the prelude to the happiness and the oneness of all their future life.

F. L. B.

## FACETIÆ.

Our best friends are those who keep perfectly quiet when some one is enumerating our virtues.

A CHEMIST says wood can be made palatable and nourishing. It will not startle many to announce that good board can be got out of saw-logs.

BOBBY was inspecting the new baby for the first time, and his dictum was as follows: "I s'pose it's nice enough what there is of it," he said, without enthusiasm; "but I'm sorry it ain't a parrot."

YOUNG Mr. Sissy (to his pretty cousin): "Aw, I tell my barber, you know, never to shave up, always to shave down." Pretty Cousin: "I fail to see how he could shave anything else but down, Charlie."

"WHAT'S this I hear about Pickins? They say he is a sufferer from kleptomania. Did you hear anything of that kind?" "Not exactly. I have been given to understand that the shopkeepers are the sufferers."

FATHER: "You want the hand of my daughter. Have you any means of existence?" Young Man: "At present, none; but I have the best prospects." Father: "Why, then, you are in need of a telescope, not a wife."

At the Zoo. The keeper gave the lion a large piece of meat. Poet: "Does he get that often?" Keeper: "He gets it regularly twice a day." Poet (with clasped hands): "What a boon it would be if I could only get a position as lion here!"

"HELLO, Charlie, what are you doing—moving?" asked one young man of another whom he met with a big valise in his hand. "I've just commenced my vacation." "Your holiday?" "Yes, I'm vacating at the request of my landlord."

BOARDER: "What are you going to have for dinner, Mrs. Myers? I am hungry as a wolf!" Landlady: "Lamb stew, Mr. Smally." Boarder: "Oh, phaw! Again? I'm already tired of lamb." Landlady: "Then you can't be hungry as a wolf."

A MUSICIAN whose nose had become distinctly coloured with the red wine he was wont to imbibe, said one day to his little son at table, "You must eat bread, boy; bread makes your cheeks red." The little boy replied, "Father, what lots of bread you must have snuffed up."

"PONSONBY, my horse got away from me last night. It is worrying me not a little." "You don't know where he is?" "No." "It's queer. One would think that some traces—" "Oh, we found the traces, and the rest of the harness. It is the horse I'm anxious about."

PAWKINS: "I saw that railway guard flog a tramp off the train yesterday. They tell me he has a great reputation for knocking down and dragging out." Jawkins: "I have heard of his reputation for knocking down, but the railway company has never been very successful in dragging anything out of him."

THIS IS HOSPITALITY.—"My father is a very genial man," she said, "and desires that I shall extend the hospitalities of the house to every caller. Will you take something before you go?" "Well, yes," replied the youth, "I will, with your permission, take a kiss from you." The maid was abashed, but the youth was equal to the occasion, and the hospitalities were extended.

He: "They give very large dishes of ice cream here." She: "Yes." He: "One dish is about all one dare eat." She: "Yes." He: "Particularly as ice cream is said to be far from healthy." She: "Yes." He: "I understand that much of the ice cream nowadays is made up of poisonous compounds." She: "Yes. Here, waiter, give me another dish of vanilla, and I'll pay for it."

THERE is a story going around of a dog which eats tacks. It probably arose from his having been seen to bite his nails.

"So you are married at last, Charlie. I hear that your wife is a very energetic woman and keeps things stirred up. Of course you married her for love?" "No," said the husband, bracing himself up, "I married her to cure my dyspepsia."

YOUNG LAWYER: "I earned my first professional fee yesterday." Young Doctor: "Indeed! Allow me to congratulate you. What was it for?" Young Lawyer: "I drew a conveyance." [It seems that his landlady remitted a week's board on condition that he trundled the baby out for an airing.]

"My dear friend, I must ask you to lend me at once five shillings; I have left my purse at home, and haven't a farthing in my pocket!" "I can't lend you five shillings now, but can put you in the way of getting the money at once." "You are extremely kind." "Here's two pence; drive home on the tram and fetch your purse."

A TRAVELLING man, noticing a 'pretty girl alone in the train, went over in her direction, and smilingly asked: "Is this seat engaged, miss?" "No, sir, but I am, and he's going to get in at the next station." "Oh—ah—indeed—beg pardon—" and he picked up his feet, after tumbling over them, and went into the smoking carriage to be alone.

THE PRESS as a MANSAYER.—"People who are connected with the press do not live long," said the professor. "The continued mental and physical effort is very varying, and a man breaks down sooner or later." "Yes, that's true. I had a brother who adopted the press as a profession, and it killed him the first day." "Indeed! How could that occur?" "Why, he fell into it. It was a hay press, you see."

A FARMER who had a sailor brother visiting him expressed doubts as to the truthfulness of some of his stories about the sea. The sailor took it quietly, and asked his brother to tell him about his farm. He complied, and spoke enthusiastically about the immense size of his hogs. When he had finished, the sailor remarked: "Well, brother, I won't say that I doubt your word, but I do think that if your hogs are as big as you represent them to be, you must be obliged to feed them in the trough of the sea!"

"No, sir," said old Tastewater; "there is good in every man." "Yes," said Lawyer Greenbag; "there was Jim Slinger; he drank, stole, swore, lied, and followed a bad life for years, and yet when we arrested him the other day—" Here Tastewater interrupted: "You told him of his old mother, of his once happy home? You found some redeeming thing about him?" "We did," said Greenbag, as expectant eyes were fixed upon him; "we found something redeemable about him—it was a pawn ticket."

Doctor: "Have you got the better of the ague yet?" Patient: "No, sir. Me an' my wife is as bad as ever, sir." Doctor: "Did you get that whisky and quinine I prescribed?" Patient: "I did, indeed, sir; but it did no good at all, at all." Doctor: "That is strange. You took it according to instructions, I suppose?" Patient: "Yis, sir. Ye know a man and his wife are one." Doctor: "What has that to do with it?" Patient: "Well, you see, sir, bein' as we are one flesh, I took the whisky, and gave Biddy the quinine."

A CLERGYMAN, in introducing a missionary from India to his congregation, concluded his remarks with a quotation from Bishop Heber's celebrated "Missionary Hymn," and said, with marked emphasis: "Our friend comes to us from that distant heathen land,

Where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile."

The missionary could not help showing his embarrassment, when he rose to speak amidst the irrepressible mirth of the congregation at their pastor's awkward and left-handed compliment.

"Was the crowd tumultuous?" inquired a lady of a gentleman who had just returned from one of the late political meetings. "Too tumultuous!" responded the gentleman. "Oh, no; it was just about mul tuons enough to fill the hall comfortably."

"You have a lovely hand, Nellie," said Algernon, softly. "Do you think so?" "I know it. I admire a beautiful hand, but mine is large and ill-formed. I wish I had a hand like yours." "Then why don't you ask for it?" He gasped once, and then asked for it.

BLOSSON (to Dumpey, who has been on a deer-hunting trip): "You are not looking so well as I expected to see you, old fellow. Did you gain anything in weight?" Dumpey: "Yes; I gained two pounds, but the doctors have succeeded in removing most of the shot."

A CRITIC who has evidently never been a favourite with the ladies, says: "Women cannot be satirical, any more than they can be humorous." They can't eh? How is it when a man proposes, after years of courtship, and the girl exclaims: "Oh, George, this is so sudden!"

"Do you think Lucie will succeed in winning Algernon?" asked the high-school teacher. "No, indeed," replied Amy; "she hasn't a ghost of a show." "My dear," protested the high-school girl, "please don't use such horrid slang as 'ghost of a show.' Say 'apparition of an exhibition.'"

He (to Miss Breezy): "I think, Miss Breezy, that your friend Miss Warbash is a very bright, vivacious young lady." Miss Breezy (feelingly): "Yes, Clara is bright and vivacious, and possesses rare culture and refinement, but I think at times she is prone to shoot her mouth off a trifle too much for absolutely correct taste."

A SCOTCH nobleman at a parish meeting made some proposals which were objected to by a well-to-do farmer, and he became highly enraged. "Sir," said he to the farmer, "do you know that I have been at two universities?" "Well, sir," said the independent farmer, "what o' that? I had a calf that sucked two kye, an' the observation I made was the mair he sucked the greater calf he grew."

"MARIA," said a lady to a servant who was waiting on the table, "go down cellar and bring up the bread which is lying on a shelf there!" "Please, ma'am, it won't do no good for me to do that," responded Maria. "Why, what in the world do you mean?" exclaimed the lady, greatly surprised. "I mean it won't do no good, 'cause the bread on the shelf down cellar is up here in this 'ere cupboard, ma'am," was Maria's conclusive reply.

"It's a funny thing, sir," said Figaro, standing off a little to contemplate the effect of his last artistic touch upon my forehead, "what foolish people there are in the world." I nodded to him in the glass, and he went on. "It always seems to me that they are made rich because they couldn't make a living for themselves if they were poor, sir." "Perhaps," said I. "Ah!" said he, with a sigh, as he flitted the napkin from under my chin, and pounced his lip as if it conferred an honour on the giver, "I sometimes wish I was a fool instead of a barber."

"YES, sir," went on Professor X to a gentleman to whom he had been recently introduced, "I have given some attention to the study of human nature, and I rarely fail to read a face correctly. Now, there is a lady," he continued, pointing across the room, "the lines of whose countenance are as clear to me as type. The chin shows firmness of disposition, amounting to obstinacy; the sharp, pointed nose a vicious temperament, the large mouth volubility, the eyes a dryness of soul, the—" "Wonderful, professor! wonderful!" "You know something of the lady, then?" said the professor, complacently. "Yes, a little, she's my wife."



## SOCIETY.

THE Queen, says *Modern Society*, insists upon every State paper of importance being submitted to her, and erases and adds as she thinks fit. In this way Her Majesty may be said to be one of the most autocratic Sovereigns in Europe, just as it was doubtless true what Mr. Lowell said of President Lincoln, that although, of course, the President of a free Republic, his personal influence was so great that at the time of his death he enjoyed more absolute power than the Czar of Russia.

We hear that a present is to be made to the Princess of Wales on the occasion of her silver wedding. Upwards of £3,000 has already been collected, and those who have the personal friendship of Her Royal Highness, or the *entree* to Marlborough House, will be the donors of the gift, which will probably take the form of a necklace. The presentation will take place on the 10th of March at Marlborough House.

THE Belgian heir-presumptive, the young Prince Baldwin, is to begin the year 1888 with a separate and independent Court, and takes his place and rank as successor to the Crown. A bright idea has struck a contemporary journal, who gravely suggests that similar dignities be granted to Prince Albert Victor of England!

PRINCESS CHRISTIAN is so thoroughly womanly, that when she comes forward to speak in public to her own sex, what she has to say is sure to be worth hearing. She is of opinion that the passion for higher education (we use the word in its cant, and not in its true, sense), is carried a great deal too far. In opening the Royal College at Holloway, her Royal Highness gave to the lady lecturers and students a really admirable warning against being too much carried away by the spirit of the age, and sacrificing womanliness to scholarship. "Let them be as learned as they will," quoth the Princess, "but let a woman never forget that she is a woman, and that her chief attribute and the power she possesses lies in her womanliness." Bravo, Helena! and we do not hesitate to add that a sweet feminine comeliness and gentleness is worth all the mathematics and logics in the world.

The religious wedding of Sarah Bernhardt's son, Maurice, and the Princess Jerka Jablonowska was in all its circumstances a truly Parisian event, although the match was a love affair. The civil marriage took place on the 28th ult., and the religious ceremony, which was followed by a lunch in Sarah Bernhardt's new and artistic mansion, came off in the small church of St. Honoré d'Eylau. The porch of the church from an early hour was decorated with green plants and blooming camellias.

The bridegroom is a tall handsome young fellow. The bride is small, beautifully-shaped, dark-eyed, and of the clear brunette complexion of Southern Europe. Her dress differed little from that of most other brides of the season, it being of white silk and satin, short in the skirt and of endless length in the train, which, by-the-by, she had taken off before she sat down to the post-nuptial lunch. Her mother was in amethyst velvet, trimmed with silver lace, and also wore a sweeping train of the courtly sort.

After her came Sarah Bernhardt. She was greatly applauded by the congregation, and was taken aback at hearing applause in a church. As her toilettes interest the feminine world, it behoves our fair readers to know that she wore a grey dress of soft twilled silk. It was short enough not to hide her neat shoes and grey silk stockings with black clocks. The over garment was a grey velvet pelisse. A long thick sable boa went round the neck. The bonnet, of salmon pink satin, was small, and made to show the back of the head. It was surmounted by the head of the black Siberian marten which gives Russian sable to the furrier.

## STATISTICS.

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES.—From the annual report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England for 1886, it appears that the births and deaths registered in the year numbered respectively 903,866 and 537,276, so that the natural increment, or excess of births over deaths, was 366,590, and equal to 1.32 per cent of the estimated population at the beginning of the year. The population of England and Wales, as enumerated in April, 1881, consisted of 25,974,439 persons. The excess of births over deaths from that date to the middle of 1886 was 1,971,600; so that the population at the later date, if its growth were determined simply by the balance between births and deaths, would have been 27,946,039. This, however, takes no account of emigration and immigration, and as there are no data for determining with accuracy the balance between these two factors, the best method of estimating the population is to assume that the rate of growth which existed in the last inter-censal period has been maintained in the years that have since elapsed. On this, which is the usual hypothesis the population of England and Wales in the middle of 1886 consisted of 27,870,586 persons, of whom 13,562,621 were males and 14,307,965 were females.

## GEMS.

SUCH is the destiny of great men that their superior genius always exposes them to be the butt of the envenomed darts of calumny and envy.

THERE is one way of attaining what we may term, if not utter, at least mortal happiness; it is this, a sincere and unrelaxing activity for the happiness of others.

If the line which separates vice from virtue were distinctly drawn, the mark would not last long, for so many would be crowding upon it that it would soon be obliterated.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO MAKE CUFFS AND COLLARS GLOSSY.—The simplest preparation consists of the following:—Four a pint of boiling water upon two ounces of gum arabic, cover it, and let it stand overnight. Use a tablespoonful of this.

TO RENOVATE AND BRIGHTEN THE GILT FRAMES OF PICTURES AND MIRRORS.—These articles may be improved by simply washing them with a small sponge moistened with spirits of wine, or oil of turpentine, the sponge only to be sufficiently wet to take off the dirt and fly marks. They should not be wiped afterwards, but left to dry of themselves.

A LIQUID GLUE CONTAINING NO ACID.—Liquid glue may be made by dissolving glue in nitric ether. The following formula is stated to be very good: 1 part sugar is dissolved in warm water, 1 part slaked lime is added, it is kept at 145°-165° F. for some days, with occasional shaking, and is then decanted; 1 part of glue is dissolved in 4 or 5 of above clear solution, to which 2 to 3 per cent. of glycerine and a few drops of lavender oil are to be added.

A LAUNDRY-MARKING INK, which will not wash or bleach out in the ordinary way of washing, and will flow freely from the pen, and will not need any preparation for setting it in either heat or chemical, but will be indelible from the minute it is put on the goods may be thus made:—Dissolve with the assistance of heat 20 parts of brown shellac in a solution of 80 parts of borax in 300 to 400 parts of water, and filter the solution while hot. Then add to the filtrate a solution of 10 parts of aniline black soluble in water, three-tenths parts of tannin, one-tenth part of picric acid, 15 parts of spirit of sal-ammoniac, and one-quarter ounce of water.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

THE warm sunshine and the gentle zephyr may melt the glacier which has bid defiance to the howling tempest; so the voice of kindness will touch the heart which no severity could subdue.

ABILITY without character is like a gilded boat unprovided with rudder or compass. It makes a fine show as it leaves the harbour; but when it gets into the open sea it is found unfit for use.

GOD made both tears and laughter, and both for kind purposes; for as laughter enables mirth and surprise to breathe freely, so tears enable sorrow to vent itself patiently. Tears hinder sorrow from becoming despair and madness.

THERE is one furnace that melts all hearts—love; there is one balm that soothes all pain—patience; there is one medicine that cures all ills—time; there is one peace that ends all strife—death; there is one light that illuminates all darkness—hope.

FOR WINTER EVENINGS.—A new game which meets with much favour is called "mummy." Divide the company in two or three parties, according to number, sending one division into an adjoining room, where they should be arranged in a semi-circle, the largest ones on the lower chairs, to decrease the height, the smaller ones *vice versa*; carefully enwrap each one in a sheet, leaving only the eyes uncovered, but concealing the dress so entirely that it is even a matter of conjecture whether it be a man or a woman. When the wrapping has been arranged, each mummy must keep it in place by the hand, and when all are ready the other divisions come in and guess to whom the eyes belong. It gives one a very uncanny feeling to have a pair of questioning eyes peering into one's own, and the disguise is so complete, those that are nearest and dearest are not often recognized. When all have had a guess, throw off the sheets, and let the other divisions change places, until all have been alternately guessed and mummied. The game may be varied by stretching heavy paper, in which groups of eyelids have been cut, across the open doorway. For economy's sake we pasted together the large, almost perfect sheets that dry goods come wrapped up in, and which the merchant willingly gave us; have it entirely dark behind the paper, and throw all the light possible on the eyes that fill these slits in the paper.

GERMAN POLITENESS.—"Ever since we have come here," says a traveller, "we have been impressed with the politeness of the people, and down in Munich, where we met it first in its intensity, I really thought I'd have a spasm unless somebody were rude to somebody else. On the cars men tipped their hats, and spoke to the entire compartment coming in and going out. On the roads in the suburbs of towns men and women saluted each other, and all strangers; in parks the same code of recognition was adopted, but the funniest was to see the Munich men's effusiveness among acquaintances. I have seen men turn around, if perchance they had passed without speaking, and, taking off their hats, make such a sweeping bow as would occupy the entire pavement. It was done in good faith, too. I attributed it all to the famous beer of Munich, which, I am free to confess, is sufficiently ambrosial in its qualities to make a man polite to a hitherto-post. The women are quite as polite, too, as the men, which is saying a good deal, for women are not so usually, particularly to each other, and I have frequently had women speak to me when it would have been quite as good form not to have done so. There's a deal of inhumanity about good form, anyway, and that the Germans disregard it is much more in their favour than if they hedged a person in with the proprieties, and let her starve for lack of the milk of human kindness."

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

—0—

E. V. W.—Do not sell your little home. You and your sister might make successful dreamers.

AGNES EVES writes the best and most careful hand. Silver Cross is affected in style. All writing should slope to the right from the bottom of the letter.

D. D.—Yes, a bright boy with a common English education can learn book-keeping in a short time. Begin at once. You write a very legible, even hand to begin with.

L. C.—Cream or pale pink will be becoming colours for an evening gown, as your style is fair, rosy, and with dark hair and brows. You write very legibly, but with less grace and freedom than you might have if you practised writing often.

A. B.—Twenty-four is not too old to begin learning book-keeping. You write nicely, and if you have a good knowledge of figures you have a substantial foundation for a knowledge of book-keeping. Your handwriting needs firmness, however. It shows delicacy and sensitiveness rather than strength of character.

T. O.—The cestus was a girdle worn just under the chest. The zone was worn around the waist. Venus' girdle was sparkling with gems, and was supposed to make the wearer beautiful. Therefore Juno borrowed it to win back the love of Jupiter, her faithless husband. "You have borrowed the cestus of Venus to-night," is a compliment that means you are unusually charming to-night.

E. F. C.—Don't write another line. If you addressed your letter correctly the young man received it, be sure. The post is wonderfully true. It works like machinery. Send him a nice birthday card. The right lover has not appeared on the scene. When he does you will not feel "repelled," as you say you are when a suitor "shows his hand." Your figure is on the stately Juno order. The hair is golden-chestnut.

B. D.—If you cannot receive gentlemen at your own home do not go elsewhere to meet them. They would certainly be justified in thinking badly of you. You are too young at sixteen to receive the company of gentlemen, unless in the presence of your mother or an elder sister; but it is probable you have no mother, or if so she is very remiss in permitting you to see and kiss a man who is not engaged to you, and has never asked you to be his wife.

E. F.—Is a pretty girl, according to her own showing, a demi-blonde, not a Spanish blonde, for she has blue-grey eyes and rosy skin. The Spanish type has brown eyes, cream-white skin, without colour, and fair hair. E. F. says, "My trouble is this: There is a young man who looks at me all the time when I am in church. What do you advise me to do?" Look at the preacher, E. F., and then you will not know whether the annoying young man is gazing at you or not.

MIRA loves and is not loved again. You can do no more than show the young man in every modest and maidenly way that you like his society. This you have already done. Stop, then, and save your self-respect. You have a pleasant home, a kind father, with plenty of means to gratify your tastes. Turn your attention to some other matter, and wait until you are sought by some one less cold to the winning and womanly traits of which we have glimpses in your letter.

BEATT.—Any unnatural heat used to curl the hair destroys its life and gloss thereon. Bangs are not so fashionable as formerly. Many young girls wear the hair put back from the brow, others bring a little over the forehead at the top in a single puff, a sort of roll. Tiny, invisible hair-pins will hold this puff in place. Trim the ends of your hair, bathe it in warm water and bay-rum, and rub the scalp well. Brush often. You are a demi-blonde. The hair you send is dark-bronze colour.

E. A. D.—If your style is piquant wear a witch's costume at the fancy ball—a short, black skirt, black stockings and high-heeled shoes with buckles, a red bodice with mutton-legged sleeves, a white kerchief crossed on the breast, a small peaked black hat, and in your hand a broom tied with red ribbon. You use too many capital letters in writing, otherwise your letter is nicely written and well composed. You are a brunette, but not of a pronounced type, or you would not freckle. The real olive-brunette skin tans, but does not freckle.

G. V.—Where a young lady is formally engaged, with the knowledge and consent of her parents, it is not improper for her to allow him to kiss her semi-occasionally, but it is better to hold such caresses in reserve. In writing to him, if she is accustomed to calling him by his Christian name, let her say "Dear Charles," or "Dear Guy." If she does not use the Christian name when speaking to him then she should address her letters, "Dear Mr. Blank," or begin them, as some do, without any address. In walking with him let her take his arm. The other style is ill-bred.

V. R. N.—A skating-dress is made of cloth or thick woollen—a plain, full skirt trimmed around the bottom with braid or fur. It is set on behind in what is known as organ plaits. To keep these in place a little wadding is tacked on the wrong side and a piece of lining sewed on afterwards to keep the plaits firmly together. The bodice is tight-fitting with a high fur or braided collar and fur or braid around the tight-fitting sleeves. Sometimes a little loose Husar jacket is worn over the bodice. On the head is jauntily set a small toque made of the same material as the dress and edged with fur. Or else an Husar cap of Astrakhan or dog skin trimmed with a silk cord and esprey.

E. B. W.—Strengthen your voice by expanding your chest and in taking all the good air you can get, also by reading aloud or reciting in the early morning. Get stout by warm, salt bathing, nourishing diet of good bread, milk, potatoes, and sweets.

T. T.—Begin the stage profession when very young if you wish to work up from the bottom—the only way possible, except to genius. It depends upon what branch of the histrionic profession you wish to enter whether you need musical ability. If it is variety business or any kind of opera you should know how to dance and sing.

L. V. C.—Vertumnus was an Etruscan or Sabine divinity, worshipped by the ancient Romans as the god who presided over the seasons, and the blossoming and bearing of trees and plants. He could assume any form his fancy suggested. He won Pomona under the guise of a blooming youth. He was represented in works of art with a pruning-knife in his hand and a wreath of ears of corn on his head.

E. L. C.—Toplitz, North Bohemia, 45 miles north-west of Prague, is a noted watering-place. Of its seventeen alkali-saline springs, eleven are said to be used chiefly for the gout and rheumatism. It is yearly visited by a great many invalids and tourists. In one season, some years ago, the numbered 30,000. It is also noted for being the place where a treaty of alliance between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, against Napoleon, was concluded Sept. 9, 1813.

R. W.—The word conventicle, it is said, originally applied to a cabal among a portion of the monks of a convent, formed in secret to secure the election of an abbot according to their own wishes. It came to be used as a term of reproach, and as such was applied to the assemblies of the followers of Wycliffe in England. It was subsequently applied to the secret meetings of the dissenters from the established churches in England and Scotland. It means literally a little assemblage or gathering.

## THE GLAD YOUNG YEAR.

ONLY a garland of withered leaves;  
Only the wall of the wind, that grieves  
Over the dying year.  
Sady we listen; our hearts are full,  
As we stand on the year's dim verge to call  
All memories sweet and dear.

As the sunset's flush in the western skies  
Deepens in splendour as daylight dies,  
So the glow of the holy-tide  
Touches with lingering tender grace  
The fading smile on the old year's face—  
The face it has glorified.

Under the garland of withered leaves,  
Lulled by the wall of the wind that grieves,  
Is sleeping spring's fairy-train;  
And gaily its ladder of stars there climbs  
The musical peal of the new year's chimes,  
Bringing hope to our hearts again.

H. M. B.

L. W.—A girl who permits a young man to "stand talking to her awhile with his arms about her," may expect to be clasped and kissed. As to what "he meant" it is hard to say. He only obeyed the masculine impulse, perhaps, or he may regard you tenderly. Better let him feel he cannot act this way until he buys the engagement ring. Even then there may be "a kiss too many." Tell your correspondent frankly that you cannot marry him. It will hurt his feelings less than if you kept him hanging on without meaning to accept him.

G. V.—Mr. Dixon in his "New America" says "The Shakers never marry, form no earthly ties, and believe in no future resurrection. They owe their origin to an Englishwoman, the wife of a blacksmith living in Manchester. While she was in prison as a brawler she said she had a vision in which Christ appeared to her and became one with her in form and spirit. She called herself the Lord's Bride. Six or seven persons believed in her vision, and with these she emigrated to America, settled at Water Vliet, New York, and established a new religion called Shakers, from the quivering motion of their bodies during their devotions.

LAURA SAYS: You tell us that gentlemen lack respect for a girl who permits herself to be kissed. Why, then, do they ask for the kisses?" It is the male nature, Laura. Do you not know the old couplet, written by a man who "had been there," as the slang goes:

"It is a man's part to try  
And a woman's to deny."

Yes, many young ladies wait with gentlemen they have just been introduced to, and many very nice girls will not wait except with a relative or old friend. We like the girls best who hold themselves a little in reserve. In return no one will hold them cheap.

GERTIE, who has grey-blue eyes under black lashes and waxen-white skin with pink cheeks, asks if she (only fourteen and a half) is not old enough to have a beau. There is a youth who "just sits and gazes" at her "all the time in church." That youth's progenitor ought to keep him at home Sundays and make him get a catechism. By the way, Gertie, how do you know he looks at you "all the time?" We are afraid you don't keep your own eyes on the preacher. Your pink-and-white skin and dimples will keep five years, and even improve. It will then be time enough to try them on a beau. Meantime, improve yourself in grace of manner, heart and mind.

E. G. V.—There are two kinds of telescopes; the astronomical, used to view the planets and stars, and the common spy-glass, used for looking at distant things on the earth. Into the latter the lenses that make the difference to which you refer are put. The price will depend upon the quality of the glass, &c.

G. H. S.—You can only try all a woman's arts to make home more attractive than the places you have band frequents. Make yourself as companionable and pleasant as possible—your freaside neat and bright. Try to amuse and interest him. You can remonstrate with him earnestly and tenderly, but do not scold or quarrel. This will only drive him further from you.

E. D. C.—Before Queen Elizabeth's time there were no colonels. The commander of a regiment was a captain. This is why you read in the old romances and ballads of captains but never of colonels. The office of colonel was created in 1538. This name is from the Italian *colonnello*—the commander of a column. The British colonel's office is, however, a sinecure, except in the artillery and engineers. It is the Lieutenant-colonel that leads the regiment in battle.

F. C.—He probably could not choose between you and your sister. Or, perhaps it was all owing to the wiles of that "other girl," and he may return to his allegiance when her spells are withdrawn. It is not right for any young man to pay such devoted attention to a girl as to make other night-be suitors stand off, but perhaps this one thought there was safety in numbers. There were two girls he was visiting, not one, and outsiders could not say which of the two was his heart's elect.

GRACIE asks for a verse for a lady's album, but says not if the lady is friend, sweetheart or only acquaintance. At a venture we set the mill in motion. Here is the grist it grinds:

I would you life might always be  
Fair as this page where now I trace  
Lines for your gentle eyes to see  
When I am in some distant place.  
Yet will my thoughts, like birds scarce fledged,  
Fly back to hover, friend, round you,  
And still I'll pray you life be hedged  
From all that is not pure and true.

BONNET LASSIE.—A fine pomatum for the hair is called "philocome"—a friend to the hair—and is made as follows: Almond oil, one pound; white wax, three ounces; otto of bergamot, one ounce; otto of nutmeg and cloves, each two drachms. Put the wax and oil in a jar in boiling water. When the wax is melted, remove the jar from the water and put in a cool place, and occasionally stir in the ingredients. When nearly cold add the perfume. It should be borne in mind that a very small portion of any oleaginous substance is sufficient to impart a glossy appearance to the hair, and this is all that is required. To use oil or pomatum in excess does more injury than good. When an additional stimulus is required, brandy mixed with castor oil will help the hair. The proportions are three ounces of oil and one of brandy.

L. D. C.—Forgery was first punished by death in England in 1834. Daniel and Robert Perreau, brothers and wine merchants, were hanged at Tyburn, January 17, 1776. The Rev. Dr. Dodd was found guilty of forging a bond, in the name of Lord Chesterfield, for £4,300. The case excited the greatest interest, and every effort was made by men of the highest influence to save him; but when the petition for pardon came to the Council, the minister of the day said to George III., "If your majesty pardon Dr. Dodd you will have murdered the Perreaux," and he was hanged accordingly, June 27, 1777. Henry Fauntleroy, a London banker, was hanged November 30, 1824, and Joseph Hutton, a Quaker merchant, suffered the same penalty, December 8, 1825. The last criminal hanged for forgery at the Old Bailey was Thomas Maynard, December 31, 1829.

C. C. A.—Robert Houdin, the French conjurer, was born at Blois, where he died in 1871. He visited Algeria in 1856, and excelled the Arabs there in their own tricks. He had a great taste for mechanics, and while learning watchmaking pursued works on natural magic, which inspired him with a taste for juggling. About the same time he became acquainted with a travelling juggler, which association stimulated his ambition to adopt juggling as a profession; but it was not until 1845 that he gave public exhibitions of his wonderful skill. At times he continued his mechanical pursuits, and in 1855, at the great Paris exhibition, he gained the gold medal for his scientific application of electricity to clocks. At one period of his life he lost all mental power for five years, in consequence of over study and application in the reconstruction of a complicated machine. He is said to have acquired a large fortune. Some of his works were translated into English and published in this country.

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